THE

NATURAL SON;

A NOVEL;

IN TWO VOLUMES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. DIDEROT,

Author of the Nun, James the Fatalist, &c.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

LITERARY integrity requires that when a tranſlation deviates from the original, ſome account ſhould be given of the liberties that have been taken.

Replete with elevated philoſophy, and captivating ſentiment, it would be juſt ſubject of regret, that a work, like that, of which the following is a tranſlation, ſhould be wholly loſt to the Engliſh reader.

In the original, however, it appeared that an indirect attempt was made to overturn one of thoſe moral principles, ſometimes called prejudices, which it would

be injurious to mankind to deſtroy. Hence, in preparing the following ſheets for the Engliſh reader, the tranſlator has thought it his duty to obviate every objection which, in a moral point of view, might be made to the original work.

A crime is ignorantly committed, and the moral of the tale requires, that it ſhould meet, if not with puniſhment, at leaſt with ſome attendant misfortune. This, ſurely, is neceſſary, if an amiable prejudice, ought rather to be confirmed than overthrown, or the Engliſh moraliſt to prevail over the French philoſopher. For, though every opinion that is admitted without inveſtigation, may be deemed a prejudice,

judice, yet ſuch opinions are often founded in philoſophical truth, and general utility.

The moral of a tale depends on the cataſtrophe of the ſtory; which, as it is fortunate or the contrary, decides the tendency of the work. In this the principal alteration is confined to the concluſion, becauſe that alone will ſufficiently obviate every objection that might otherwiſe have ariſen. Had the like freedom been uſed with the other novels of the ſame celebrated writer, the former tranſlators would have acted a more decent, a more reſpectable, and a more patriotic part.

It is ſcarcely needful to add, that where the French author has either fallen into that jejune-

neſs ſo prevalent in his native language, attempted to palliate a crime, or deviated into unneceſſary, perhaps indelicate minuteneſs, ſome licence has been uſed, and ſome paſſages in the three laſt ſheets ſuppreſſed by the tranſlator, the better to adapt his ſtyle to an Engliſh ear, and recommend the character of the work to general approbation.

THE NATURAL SON.

LETTER I.

FORGIVE me, my dear friend, and do not accuſe me of neglect. My ſilence was unavoidable. I was anxious to be further informed relative to the myſtery of my birth. But alas! all my enquiries have proved fruitleſs, and you can only participate my uncertainty and diſappointment.

I have lived to the end of my fourteenth year, in the full perſuaſion, I was the ſon of a poor peaſant, and regard-

ing the Marquis D'Oſſan as a protector, deſirous of elevating me above my humble lot. The obſcurity of my birth, far from ſhocking my ſelf-love, was dear to my heart. The empty pomp of the world was unable to excite my deſires, and my only wiſh was to return to the peaceful repoſe of ruſtic life.

Of this I often ſpoke to the Marquis. Your kindneſs, Sir, ſaid I, demands my warmeſt gratitude, but alas, I cannot accept your favors. Reſtore me, I beſeech you, to family, whom I conſtantly regret; for I had rather be poor than baniſhed from my relations, who have always ſhewn me the tendereſt regard. But he laughed at my requeſt, telling me I ſtood much in need of his advice and inſtruction.

The ſentiments he endeavoured to inſtill, relative to the pleaſure of living in the world, were unable to influence

influence my mind, or ſatisfy my heart; nor could the amuſements by which he endeavoured to divert me, baniſh the image of the cottage where I had been nurſed, and it continually recurred to my mind, accompanied with ſenſations of tenderneſs and grief. In noiſy cities one ſlight impreſſion is conſtantly ſucceeding another, which it effaces, like the undulations of the ruffled lake; but in the country the objects that ſurround us are more congenial to the heart, and ſink deeper into the ſoul. There alone do we enjoy our exiſtence, there alone do we paſs our days in happineſs and mutual affection.

Perceiving, however, that I was not happy, and that my health declined, the Marquis altered his mode of behaviour towards me. Taking me one day into his ſtudy, he addreſſed me thus:

" A miſtake, of which I was myſelf the cauſe, and of which you will preſently perceive the neceſſity, has led you to believe Richard was your father. My dear boy that worthy peaſant has only foſtered you. His charge is now fulfilled, and you muſt relinquiſh your deſire of living with him, to purſue the career marked out for you by your birth and fortune. I would have ſuffered you to remain perpetually ignorant of your true origin, to ſpare you unneceſſary pain, but your ſilly prejudices force me to draw aſide the veil that conceals from you your misfortunes.

" I had once a friend to whom I was united by the tendereſt and moſt intimate regard. He had entruſted me with the ſecret of his paſſion for an object by whom it was returned. She was poſſeſſed of every advantage of wit, beauty, birth, and fortune; and my

my friend was highly deſerving of her love. He was diſtinguiſhed by a thouſand virtues, and a thouſand amiable qualities; his birth was illuſtrious, and his poſſeſſions ample. Every thing concurred to render the lovers happy, and afforded them the moſt ſmiling proſpect of perpetual enjoyment. Three months were the appointed period of their nuptials, when a cruel fate deſtroyed theſe flattering expectations. My friend was attacked by a dreadful malady, which, after two months painful illneſs, put a period to his exiſtence.

" This premature death afflicted us all with grief and melancholy. I deplored a friend, for whoſe loſs nothing could conſole me. But the wretched object of his affection—ſhe wept not. Alas! how can I deſcribe her anguiſh, her deſpair. The hand of death tore from her a lover, a

huſband—it tore from her the father of the child ſhe bore!

" My friend had in his laſt moments confided to me a portfolio, containing the whole of his fortune, which he deſtined for his child. Never, never, will his laſt words be obliterated from my heart. ' Adieu, my dear D'Oſſan,' ſaid he, tenderly preſſing my hand, ' Ah! deign to be a father and a friend to the unfortunate being, to whom a momentary indiſcretion has given life.'

" Some time after, his wretched widow brought two children into the world, amidſt the moſt heart rending tears and grief. The girl and boy to whom ſhe gave birth, it was neceſſary ſpeedily to remove from the notice of an unjuſt and cruel world, ever greedy of feaſting on the miſery of others, ever on the watch to add to the number of its victims.

" You,

" You, my dear boy, were one of thoſe children. Your ſiſter I confided to faithful hands, and placed you with Richard, to whom I delivered the ſum he aſked for your board during ten years; at which time he was to reſtore you to me, or to thoſe who ſhould exhibit marks ſimilar to thoſe you bore. This done, I took care to inveſt the ſums, entruſted me by my friend, in ſolid ſecurities, half in your name, the reſt in that of your ſiſter."——

But I muſt beg your indulgence, my dear Dormeuille, while I repoſe from my narrative. When I ſpeak on the ſubject of my infant years, my grief and pain revive with encreaſing ſeverity. They diſturb my mind, and diſable me from continuing. To-morrow you ſhall know the reſt.

LETTER II.

I RESUME my melancholy tale, ſince you are reſolved to know, and to participate my misfortunes. My affectionate friend, how grateful am I for your generous regard!—You recollect I was deſcribing my interview with the Marquis. He continued thus:

" Scarcely had you compleated your tenth year, when I recalled you home. All my cares were then directed to fulfil the dying requeſt of my departed friend. Your education now became my only ſtudy, and nothing was ſpared for your inſtruction or your enjoyment. But I perceive all my cares are fruitleſs, and you would quit me to go and live like a ſavage among the woods. I hope, however, the recital

recital of these circumstances will banish that idea, that you will be true to the nobility of your birth, nor slight the benefits conferred on you by nature, and that you will, in all respects, be worthy of those who have been the authors of your existence.

" Consider your situation. What, my dear friend, can you want, what can you desire? At fourteen years of age, you already know several languages, and your first advances in the sciences, promise successes that will obtain you the admiration of the world. You have every advantage of person, and a fortune that places you in the highest rank; for here 'tis gold alone that fixes the place of each individual in society. Your genius for mathematics has determined me to procure you a commission in the royal corps of engineers, and I

have no doubt my intereſt will ſucceed in obtaining it.

"What more can you deſire? Conſider; can there exiſt a more brilliant proſpect? If you are not the moſt fortunate of men, I really cannot diſcover who is happy. Yet you ſigh for the brutal life of a peaſant.—Come, my dear boy, you muſt abſolutely abandon your irrational deſires, and become worthy of the blood that flows in your veins."

This diſcourſe was ſo aſtoniſhing, that I was long unable to make the leaſt reply. It was impoſſible for me at once to adopt the idea that I was noble. Alas! I felt happier in the belief that I was a poor peaſant, and it was with grief, and after a long conteſt with myſelf, that I embraced the melancholy truth.

At length I replied to the Marquis, "I yield to neceſſity, which forbids me

me a ſhepherd's life, whoſe tranquillity, happineſs, and equality of condition, are ſo attractive, and I conſent to entertain gratitude and friendſhip alone for the family of Richard, ſince my filial and paternal affections are claimed by others. Deign, then, to acquaint me with my real mother and my real ſiſter. Doubtleſs they will receive with tranſport my firſt embraces."

"Alas! my dear friend, I cannot ſatisfy you. However honourable the wiſh, it muſt not be complied with. Learn, that your birth, on which our laws have frowned, muſt be for ever ſecret. Your ſiſter is in the ſame ſituation. A cruel neceſſity ſeparates you, and forbids your embracing each other in the preſence of her who bore you. The error of your mother is buried in the boſoms of a ſmall number of friends. She is married, has

children who demand all her care, and is happy. But if her weakneſs were diſcovered, ſhe would inſtantly be plunged into an abyſs of miſery. You muſt not even hear her name, or the place where ſhe reſides; for the goodneſs of your heart would unavoidably lead you into ſome fatal indiſcretion. Summon then, my youthful friend, all the ſtrength of mind you poſſeſs, and ſubmit to an unalterable deſtiny. Would you torment her to whom you have already coſt ſo many tears? No. Forget that ſhe exiſts, and regard me as the whole of your family. My affection for you ſhall give to the illuſion all the charms of truth."

So many proofs of his kindneſs had a powerful effect on my ſenſibility. But I could never conſole myſelf for the misfortune of living deſtitute of parents and relations, and owing my exiſtence to connections I could not boldly

boldly avow. Nor could I ever overcome the melancholy impreſſed upon me by theſe circumſtances.

Yet I implicitly obeyed my worthy protector, my only ſupport. He introduced me into the engineers' corps, which in any other circumſtances might have pleaſed me, as it gave me an opportunity of indulging my paſſion for the ſciences. But the pleaſures procured me by my occupations, and my ſucceſs, were diſturbed by a thouſand melancholy thoughts. Whenever I heard my companions talking of their families, one ſhewed me the portrait of an affectionate ſiſter, another read me the kindeſt letters from his father, a third was a bleſſing to a mother he adored, and became the hope and pride of his family, by an early reputation that anticipated his years. Another, ſtill more happy, took leave of me to paſs a few months with his relations

relations, in his native country. All this I was forced to witneſs in ſilence; I retired in ſolitude, and gave vent to my grief and my tears.

Some time after, the hand of death robbed me of him who had been to me as a father. Ah! how I deplored his loſs. I was now alone in the univerſe, and deſtitute of every tie that binds man to man. I had not then the good fortune to have a ſingle friend; the young people of my acquaintance being too frivolous to engage my affections. Every thing immediately aſſumed the moſt deſperate appearance, and all I beheld became a ſource of the deepeſt affliction. At length a ray of hope pierced theſe dark clouds, that gathered round my head, and I indulged a hope, that in ſeeking for my mother and my ſiſter, chance might favor my reſearches. This idea ſeemed to reſtore me to life and to myſelf.

myſelf. I quitted the ſervice, and determined to travel till I had obtained the object of my purſuit. Alas! that purſuit has proved fruitleſs. I have carried my grief and melancholy with me to every part of Europe, through Italy, Germany, England, and France, ever ſighing in vain after my family and my native ſoil.

I am far, however, from regretting my travels, ſince they have procured me the pleaſure and happineſs of my dear friend's acquaintance, and from that moment my afflictions have appeared leſs oppreſſive. Continue, then, your friendſhip, my dear Dormeuille, for that is my only conſolation.

You are now acquainted with the cauſe of that dejection you have ſo often ſpoken of with the tendereſt concern. You are now in poſſeſſion of all the ſecrets of my ſoul. In fu-

ture

ture I will conceal nothing from you. You ſhall know all my misfortunes and my pleaſures, my fears and my hopes, and every ſentiment that agitates my breaſt. You will, doubtleſs, find me often unequal, incorrect, and diffuſe, but let friendſhip ever plead for me, and you will feel for my defects all the indulgence they demand.

It is my intention to continue my travels; for although my hopes are feeble, I cheriſh them with fervor. How can I for ever renounce the ſole object of my wiſhes? Heaven, ſurely, will take pity on my tears, and deign to grant deſires, ſo pure, ſo legitimate. Alas! I only wiſh to behold my mother and my ſiſter, without being known by them (ſince my deſtiny forbids it) and to know what part of the earth they inhabit. All my time ſhould then be devoted to viſiting

viſiting them alternately, and my heart ſhould pay them a ſilent tribute of reſpect and love.

LETTER III.

How long I have waited in expectation of a letter from my dear friend! With what emotion did I receive and open it! How ſoothing, how delightful to the unfortunate, to be beloved, and to know that a virtuous mind ſympathiſes in our ſufferings. Your letters, my dear Dormeuille, are the chief ſolace of my life. Replete with ſound philoſophy, calculated at once to pleaſe and to enlighten, they ever afford me new proofs of your friendſhip, which is

the

the chief enlivener of my ſolitude. Frequently do I quit Montaigne and Rouſſeau, to read your letters again and again. All the books in the world are not of equal value with one ſincere friend.

Do write often, and let us, if poſſible, ſtill encreaſe our mutual attachment, by conſtant intercourſe. The pleaſure of loving you, and of being the object of your eſteem, is each day more animating to my heart. In this age of frivolities, it is ſo uncommon to meet with men of truly-cultivated minds, or who deſerve our friendſhip, that I am every day more diſguſted with the corruptions of the world, and every day regret not paſſing my time with you. Unfortunately, intereſt, which divides all mankind aſunder, has alſo ſeparated us: but, in juſtice to your heart, I am convinced, that were you your own

maſter

maſter, that ſeparation would never have taken place.

Do not think, my dear friend, that I am reproaching you; but recollect, that when I loſe you, I part with the only friend I have in the world, and bid adieu to the only happineſs I know. I am now the moſt deſolate of human beings: ever alone, yet wandering among a crowd of ſtrangers; ever diſappointed in my hopes of meeting the object of my moſt tender wiſhes, and robbed, perhaps for ever, of the moſt delicious pleaſure my nature can experience, that of preſſing to my boſom the mother to whom I owe my life: a pleaſure, alas! not even denied to animals, yet to me entirely unknown. Nothing, my dear friend, but your letters, can calm the tumult of my mind.

In a few days I am to viſit the good old Richard, whom I have not ſeen

theſe ten years. It is about ſixty leagues from hence to the village where he lives. With what delight ſhall I enter his cottage, and ſee his little family, who had formerly ſhewn me ſo much affection. I ſhall try to loſe myſelf in his ſhadowy wood, and ſmiling meadows, where I taſted all the innocent and ſimple pleaſures of infancy in undiſturbed tranquillity. O ye delightful pleaſures of memory! Could ye but diſperſe this grief and melancholy that fruitleſsly conſume my days!

This journey, too, will favour my reſearches. Oh! that Richard may be informed of my birth, or, at the leaſt of ſome particulars concerning it! A ſingle fact, a ſingle expreſſion, the ſlighteſt conjecture, may diſcover to me the truth. My dear friend, do but imagine the tranſport with which I indulge this idea, which has for ſome time

time engroſſed my mind. This alone, perhaps, leads me to the ſcenes where I paſſed my infancy. Ah! why did it not occur before? I cannot account for my ſtupidity; but the moſt true, and apparently the moſt ſimple, is often the laſt idea that finds acceſs to the mind.

LETTER IV.

HERE, then, I am arrived in the little town, I have been accuſtomed to call my native place; for there friendſhip firſt beſtowed on me her moſt tender cares: and the country where friendſhip has foſtered us, is ſurely as much our own as that of nature. The room where I now write, was once

inhabited

inhabited by the Marquis, and here he firſt announced to me my misfortunes. With what emotions of hope and fear, of joy and grief, did I enter it! how happy did I feel that the landlord had not diſplaced a ſingle chair or table of its antiquated furniture! How my eyes ran over the ancient tapiſtry and hangings, and my heart dilated with the renewal of objects rendered dear by friendſhip! In this very chair my dear departed friend uſually ſat, and wrote at this very table. 'Tis here we converſed on the moſt intereſting ſubjects, and here I received from him the counſels of experience, and the careſſes of eſteem. How precious the remembrance of theſe enjoyments, how charming the emotions produced by friendſhip! Yes, ſhe communicates to every thing the moſt tender ſenſations, and affects the mind at all times, in all places,

and

and under every change of circumſtance!

I had the greateſt deſire to reviſit this town, not only on account of the ideas and remembrances it would awaken in my breaſt, but of the diſcoveries I anticipated. How can I believe I ſhould have been kept there ſo many years, had I not been within the reach of her who is the object of my ſearches. Surely ſhe inhabited the ſame town, and ſaw me every day. I muſt have grown up under her inſpection, while her maternal affection, watched over the education of my mind, beſtowing on me, under the name of friendſhip, all the cares of a tender mother.—Alas! I now diſcover how chimerical were my hopes; for all my ſpeculations have proved abſolutely fruitleſs. I have not, ſince my arrival, beheld one individual I ſhould wiſh to call mother or ſiſter.

Nothing

Nothing but a collection of vain ignorant women, mere puppets, danced about as vanity and fashion command.

You will easily perceive that in such a circle, my days do not pass in the most agreeable manner, since it does not even afford one interesting acquaintance. To pass our time happily, and be esteemed and loved in the world, it is necessary to possess both the indifference and the vivacity of that *bon ton* which conceals the true character under the colours of deceit. The sincere and tender heart of sensibility cannot assume these false appearances, or disguise the inward melancholy that too often accompanies them. She cannot discover any object worthy of her desires, and becomes an incommodious intrusion on less elevated souls. This is precisely what I experience. These people

people cannot bear my habitual gravity, or my air of abſent reflection. I am, in every one's opinion, a ridiculous ſingularity. The men ſay I am a perſonification of Melancholy, and the women that it is impoſſible to be more ſtupid and awkward. But what avail their opinions? They cannot touch my heart, for it is engroſſed by objects more worthy its attachment.

P. S. Do not write to me hither. I ſhall ſet off to-morrow for ſome place or other in ſearch—Alas! in ſearch of happineſs.

LETTER V.

Il ſonno è 'n bando; e del ripoſo è nulla;
Ma ſoſpiri, e lamenti infin' all' alba,
E lagrime, che l'alma agli occhi invia.

Long-ſought repoſe now ſhuns my anxious bed,
And balmy ſleep on fluttering wing hath fled;
From eve to morn my heart-felt ſorrows riſe,
And my ſad ſoul o'erflows in tears and ſighs.

I HAVE riſen before daylight to write to you. My heart is full of emotion, and ſeeks to repoſe its ſenſations in the boſom of the only friend it knows. Hear, then, with patience, my melancholy tale. Allow me to tell you, without reſerve, my inmoſt thoughts, and moſt tender feelings. Alas! I am a poor wanderer in baniſhment, and you muſt excuſe the extravagances I may utter.

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The new ſcene I witneſs here, affords me no higher ſatisfaction than every other country I have viſited. Every thing I perceive combines to oppoſe my wiſhes, and if Richard does not re-animate my hope, even my hope will expire without recovery.

Can it be true that the ſacred ties of blood, thoſe ſoothing ſympathies which conſtitute the happineſs of every heart endued with ſenſibility, are entire ſtrangers to my breaſt—to me who am ſo exquiſitely alive to their enjoyments? A forlorn wanderer on the earth, and a ſtranger among mankind, I feel, that I am the moſt miſerable of beings. All other men can unite together in the bonds of love and reciprocal regard; all have brothers, ſiſters, relations. Yet there is no one from whom I can claim even the ſlighteſt attentions, and pity, pity alone, is all that is my due.

Let not the idea revolt you, for alas! it is too true. Even the friendſhip with which you endeavour to conſole me, is but a more tender ſpecies of compaſſion than that of others. Can I, in fact, claim the deareſt ſentiments of your heart? No! theſe you owe to your family and relations. 'Tis a natural, an unavoidable preference, at which I dare not murmur. It is my deſtiny to paſs my life in perpetual ſolitude, and unceaſing grief.

Every object I behold but feeds my ſorrows, and makes me feel more keenly my hapleſs ſituation. From the ſhepherd to the monarch, from the inſect whoſe minuteneſs eſcapes our organs, to the unwieldy elephant, from the harmleſs lamb to the cruel and pitileſs tyger, every thing that breathes, except myſelf, may conſole its aching heart in the boſom of an affec-

affectionate family. A fugitive among mankind, baniſhed for-ever from her that gave me life, I am, as it were, an outlaw, whom all nature ſeems to proſcribe. The poet has expreſſed my ſituation in the following nervous lines:

Dans un monde inſenſible, ou ſa douleur ſe perd,
Il erre, il va criant, ainſi qu'en un deſert.

Unfeeling world! where I in grief am loſt,
A weeping wand'rer on a deſert coaſt.

Alas! I envy even the wretch whom an empty world conſiders the loweſt of mankind, the beggar, who ſolicits with ſo affecting a humility, the trifling tribute of humanity. Each night, when he returns home to his wife and children, with the bread they have been expecting in anxiety, his cares are forgotten in the tender endearments of his family. But where ſhall I unburden my ſorrows, and pour forth my tears? or, who ſhall bid them

ceaſe to flow? Oh! my mother! my mother! may you never know the anguiſh I endure.

Beato è chi non naſce.

Ah! happier they, unknown to care and ſtriſe,
Who die ere yet they paſs the gates of life.

LETTER VI.

YOUR advice appears very judicious, were it but practicable:

Helas! aux cœurs heureux les vertus ſont faciles.

The happy find it pleaſure to be juſt.

My dear friend do but reflect on my preſent ſituation, on all I have ſuffered in my youth, and the ſenſibility

lity that agitates my boſom; and you will then no longer deem my complaints exaggerated.

You are aſtoniſhed, that without the leaſt knowledge relative to thoſe I am ſeeking, I declare ſo confidently, I have ſeen no one who reſembles them. "I know not," you ſay, "their perſons, their condition in life, nor the place where they reſide. I know not even their name." My dear friend, I carry with me a certain guide, who has diſcovered to me a conſiderable portion of theſe particulars, and promiſes to unveil the whole, if we have but the good fortune to arrive at the place they inhabit. This difficulty, however, is great; perhaps inſurmountable.—But, who is this guide, you will aſk, and why have I not ſaid any thing on the ſubject before?—I beg pardon for the omiſſion, and will immediately correct it. That

guide, Dormeuille, is—divine. 'Tis a myſterious being, yet poſſeſſed by all the world. It traverſes in an inſtant towns, provinces, and kingdoms. The earth itſelf, and all the planets, notwithſtanding the rapidity of their motion, cannot out-run this aſtoniſhing power. She paſſes the immeaſurable bounds of time and ſpace, ſhe confers on kings, their majeſty and their dominion, on nations peace and ſecurity. She flatters the great by ſplendid titles, and gives them their conſideration and influence in ſociety. To her many of the votaries of vanity owe their youth, their beauty, and their wit. She is the conſoler of the unhappy, the ſupport of the indigent. In ſhort, this genius of beneficence, ſometimes converts even misfortune into felicity. If you cannot gueſs her name, confeſs your want of penetration, notwithſtanding all your learning

learning and talents. My dear friend, this wonderful being is—Imagination. 'Tis ſhe whom God has given to man as the image of happineſs, while he witholds the reality, till we are prepared for its enjoyment.

But you have not yet fully diſcovered my meaning, I will explain myſelf. Before I commenced my travels, I conſidered the difficulties I had to encounter, and theſe appeared great and important. I was not, however, diſmayed by a ſearch of perhaps twenty, thirty, or even forty years, for I reſolved, if neceſſary, to devote to it my life. But what moſt diſcouraged me, was my total ignorance of every thing that could lead to a knowledge of my relations; for, without ſome clue how could I diſcover them, even ſhould fortune bring me into their preſence? To ſolve this problem appeared impoſſible. In vain did I

examine it again and again in every point of view, and reflected on it night and day, during many months. I only grew more dejected; for I perceived my hopes had no foundation. A dream, however, delivered me from my anxiety. Chance is often more favorable to man than the moſt brilliant genius. In fact, it is often almoſt his only guide. Oh! my dear friend, what a ſurpriſing dream! Hear it, and when misfortune oppreſſes you, invoke the aid of ſleep. 'Tis a divinity that will at leaſt conſole your ſorrows.—I beheld a woman of a noble and eaſy deportment, ſitting near a table, where lay a number of children's toys. She was ſuckling a child whoſe little hands preſſed her beautiful boſom, while its animated black eyes turned at intervals from her to me. Another of three or four years old was leaning on her knee,

and

and looking ſtedfaſtly at its brother, with an air of jealouſy. What an intereſting picture! Theſe little creatures already exhibited in their infantine countenances, the early traits of their mother's beauty. But, how can I deſcribe to you, my dear Dormeuille, this angel of a mother. Her dreſs was a robe of pure white, without any other ornament than its own elegant ſimplicity; and her hair, which was neither decorated with drapery nor jewels, correſponded with the maternal neatneſs of her figure. Her lovely ſmile, her modeſt eye, the angelic ſoftneſs of her whole appearance, ſeemed to pourtray all the amiable qualities a mortal can poſſeſs. Her attention ſeemed divided between the infant at her breaſt, and the other, whoſe uneaſineſs ſhe endeavoured to pacify. Sometimes ſhe caſt her eyes towards heaven, and then looking at

me with a mixture of tenderneſs and grief, ſhe cried, " Oh! my ſon!"—Judge what were my ſenſations at theſe words! I cannot deſcribe the emotion that agitated me, as I ſtretched out my arms to embrace her.—But I awoke and found it was a dream!

Soon after I fell aſleep again, when a new viſion preſented itſelf. A young female, between fifteen and twenty years of age was walking in an orchard with two others of nearly the ſame age. She had preciſely the ſame countenance, dreſs and mien, as the amiable mother I had ſeen before. One hand held a handkerchief, the other leaned on one of her companions. With eyes bathed in tears, ſhe exclaimed, in the moſt affecting accent, " Oh! my dear friends, how happy are you, who have juſt been embracing an affectionate

tionate mother! Alas! I never knew the pleaſure of having one." Her voice was drowned in tears and ſighs, and ſhe could ſay no more.

This laſt dream quite bewildered me. I exclaimed, "My ſiſter! my ſiſter! I ſprang forward, and when I awoke, was kneeling on the floor, with my arms extended towards heaven.

The violent emotion excited by theſe dreams, continued during ſeveral hours. I walked to and fro with a hurried ſtep, agitated alternately by tranſports of joy and grief; yet, convinced theſe dreams were an indication from heaven, and that I had beheld the forms of my mother and ſiſter, who were far from happy. Ah! how afflicting was this thought!

As ſoon as I recovered myſelf, what I had before conſidered as a divine miracle, appeared the pure

effect

effect of my own buſy feelings. In my penſive moments of reverie, I had always delighted to paint my mother and ſiſter as poſſeſſing all the virtues of their ſex, and my dream was but the picture of my waking thoughts. How could I repreſent the objects I loved, but in the moſt attractive forms? I thought the truth of my viſion proved, by that ſympathy between the moral and phyſical faculties, which ſhews, through the medium of the ſenſes, all the characters of the ſoul. "Surely," ſaid I, "'Tis a fact, that nature deſigned to repreſent the moral by the phyſical man, ſince ſhe has given us features attached to each virtue or vice, and determined that chaſtity and profligacy, modeſty and effrontery, ſhould be productive of very different forms. The mental qualities, and the movements of the body, are connected by indiſſoluble bonds,

bonds, and form a continued chain, of which it is ſufficient to touch a ſingle link, to feel and comprehend its whole extent. Hence it is, that in a well written romance, where every trait accords with truth and nature, the ſentiments and actions of the various perſonages, inſenſibly convey to us their real individual character; and this in ſo lively a manner, that we could almoſt draw their countenaces. Hence, too, it is, that the virtues with which my mother and my ſiſter always preſented themſelves to my mind, and which are doubtleſs natural to their hearts, have, by the intervention of dreams, impreſſed their true image on my heart.

I eaſily perſuaded myſelf of the truth of this reaſoning, however weak it may appear. Whatever gives us pleaſure, has ſo much power over our minds, that it requires little aid from reaſon

reaſon to be well received. Convinced I had now diſcovered the long deſired clue, I determined to traverſe the whole earth, led by theſe portraits which my imagination had impreſſed upon my heart, though I never yet met with the reality.

This, my dear Dormeuille, is the faithful guide, the friend, the conſoler, that attends me. If you conſider all this irrational, let not cold reaſon tell me ſo. Though it be chimerical, I will cheriſh the illuſion, ſince it forms my only enjoyment, and without it life would be inſupportable. I follow my conductor wherever ſhe leads the way, and liſten to all the counſels ſhe gives. In ſhort, ſhe is my only oracle. Whenever I behold a woman of proud inſulting deportment, and of imperious voice, or a coquette, whoſe inſenſible and depraved heart, flies from virtue and courts frivolity,

this

this ſilent friend whiſpers, "Seek elſewhere objects more worthy thy eſteem, ſeek for a tender mother who is conſtantly occupied with the care of her children, and treats them with tenderneſs and ſweetneſs; a wife, whoſe only object is the happineſs of her huſband and family; a girl alive to paternal affection and filial piety, and whoſe manners are expreſſive of innocence and ſimplicity. But, be not diſcouraged, for you muſt travel over many diſtant lands, ere you find theſe amiable perſons."

LETTER VII.

I CONGRATULATE you with all my heart upon your marriage. You are at length, then, about to enjoy the reward of your conſtancy, and taſte the ſolid happineſs of paſſing your life with an amiable companion, who at once merits your confidence and love. This news gives me more pleaſure than I can expreſs, and the only deduction it ſuffers, is, that I cannot be with you at this intereſting period. I ſhould then have the enjoyment of beholding my friend as happy as I can wiſh him. But one hundred and fifty leagues are too far to travel in two days. Rely upon it, however, I ſhall ſpeedily pay a viſit to your new habitation, and embrace your charming Leonora. You muſt

confeſs,

confeſs, you are one of the happieſt of men, to have met with ſuch a wife in the age in which we live. All the powers of heaven muſt have united to confer upon her ſo many amiable qualities, and I know not what part of the earth could boaſt her equal. In her, beauty, modeſty, ſenſibility, and ſweetneſs, are combined with wit and judgment, to adorn a heart of infinite goodneſs. I ſhall ever remember her cares and attentions to her relations, her kindneſs and affection to her brothers and ſiſters, her obliging and gracious manner to ſtrangers, and her zealous interpoſition for the relief of the unfortunate.

Her mind, however, has not received much poliſh from education, a neglect, you will ſoon repair: for knowledge and talents are indiſpenſable to women, and perpetuate charms more laſting than the beauties

of

of perſon, which ſoon muſt yield to the chilling hand of time. Indeed, I pity the unfortunate huſband, who finding his wife a mere walking ſtatue, ſoon becomes diſguſted and indifferent, and flies from home to enjoy a moment of communicative pleaſure.

But, even ſuch a ſtatue I ſhould prefer to the affected pedant, who would eſtabliſh in my houſe a dogmatical literary tribunal, and neglect the duties of a wife and a mother. The beſt help-mate is the ſweet and modeſt beauty, who not deſiring to dazzle with empty brilliancy the multitude ſhe deſpiſes, ſeeks no other charms than thoſe by which ſhe can become more pleaſing to her huſband, her children, and her friends. Ah! my dear Dormeuille, how valuable is ſuch a wife! How ſweet to paſs our days with ſuch a companion! She would

would become continually more intereſting, and every moment would be ſweetened by her endearments. Should you feel dejected, her amiable cheerfulneſs enlivens you; if you would purſue a train of reflection, ſhe is able to unite in the object of your ſtudy, and her appoſite obſervations contribute to enlighten your mind. If you are admiring a compoſition of genius, or of eloquence, her taſte will diſcover beauties that eſcaped you; and if you read a beautiful ſentiment, her heart participates in the emotion, her eye ſheds the tear of ſenſibility, and at that happy moment, an affectionate ſqueeze of the hand, or a tender kiſs, increaſe the ſoftly thrilling enjoyment, more gratifying becauſe reciprocally reflected. In ſhort, you find in her that perfect ſympathy of ſentiment, which alone communicates to matrimony

trimony its moſt permanent enjoyments.

This, my dear Dormeuille, is my idea of perfect happineſs—of that happineſs you are fitted to taſte, in conjunction with your amiable Leonora. Cultivate this young plant, my dear friend, and it will produce the bloſſoms of youth, and the ſhady repoſe of age.

LETTER VIII.

YOUR conduct towards your relations has, if poſſible, increaſed my friendſhip for you, though it has not ſurpriſed me. They were poor, and you have determined not to accept an additional fortune without giving them

them the greater part of your own. This is agreeable to the dictates of Nature. Could you bear to live in eaſe and opulence, and ſee a father groaning under the depreſſion of poverty? May you enjoy, my dear friend, all the happineſs you merit. May you long receive the tender careſſes of a wife who idolizes you, and of a father and mother who bleſs the day they gave you life.

Alas! all theſe ſoothing ſentiments are baniſhed from my heart. I have a mother and a ſiſter, whom I love without knowing them, and whom a cruel deſtiny condemns me perhaps never to behold. Why did not the Marquis d'Oſſan ſatisfy a curioſity that was dictated by Nature? Why did he not yield to my intreaties? How could his heart reſiſt the tears with which I bathed his hands? But nothing could ſoften his too ſteady reſo-

reſolution; and a ſhort time previous to his death, all I could obtain was this chilling ſentence, "Ceaſe, my dear friend," ſaid he with firmneſs, "ceaſe to torment me with your inquiries. I have promiſed, upon my honor, never to reveal the ſecret, not even to you. Unfortunately, the law condemns you to live in a perpetual baniſhment from your relations."

Is it poſſible, then, my dear Dormeuille, that the law can burſt aſunder the ties of Nature—thoſe ſacred bonds that unite children with their parents? Surely the fabricators of ſuch a law knew not the joys of filial love; ſurely they did not merit to taſte of its delights.

LETTER IX.

EACH day my ſituation becomes more painful, more inſupportable; and I feel a ſettled melancholy that nothing can diſſipate. Every thing is irkſome to me; and to complete my miſery, even ſolitude is now become a torment. In vain do I recur to the amuſement of reading. While my eyes run over the pages, my heart is rambling at a diſtance.

I ſhall ſet off to-morrow to viſit my worthy peaſants, the only family I belong to. For them, alas! I am indebted, not to Nature, but to friendſhip, whoſe ſympathies are often ſtronger, than the ties of conſanguinity itſelf.

Adieu! my dear friend. I ſhall write you an account of my little journey.

LETTER X.

EVERY thing combines to oppoſe my wiſhes, and diſconcert my plans. Juſt as I was ſetting off, an accident detained me, which will oblige me to ſtay here perhaps a month. Judge of my impatience at this delay.

The carriage was ready, and the horſes put to, when George, who approves of nothing but what he does himſelf, did not like the manner in which the baggage was faſtened on before; and, notwithſtanding my remonſtrances, could not be contented without

without undoing the cords. While he was replacing them, a child ran by, flying a little paper kite at the end of a ſtring. This frightened the horſes, who ſtarted back with violence, and threw down my too officious ſervant. At firſt I thought he was killed, and my blood ſeemed to freeze in my veins as I ran towards him. But, fortunately, he received no injury except in his right leg, and the ſurgeon aſſured me he would be perfectly well in a month.

George, however, was not to have accompanied me. He was to wait my return hither in about a week, when I intended to ſet out with him on a viſit to you. But although I have no occaſion for *him*, he has much for me; and I cannot leave an old ſervant among entire ſtrangers, with only a nurſe, perhaps, who would not pay him the requiſite attention.

I am reſolved to ſtay here till he is completely recovered. Surely he would have a right to complain, if I neglected a man who has ſerved me with ſo much aſſiduity and attachment. In my long illneſs, he paſſed almoſt every night by my bed-ſide, notwithſtanding all that was ſaid and done to prevent it. He would not believe any one could feel the ſame friendſhip and ſolicitude for his maſter as himſelf. It would have affected you to ſee this worthy ſervant attend with indefatigable minuteneſs to every thing he thought could do me good. He was ever in motion, ever contriving ſomething for my comfort, and was miſerable when he could not ſucceed. George takes care of me like a father, and I love him like a ſon. Yet he is paſſionate, even to brutality, and I am often obliged to yield to him: but he has ſo good a heart,

heart, that I readily excuſe his faults. Beſides we owe conſiderable indulgence to the weakneſſes of uninſtructed minds! Thoſe maſters who are ſo outrageous againſt their ſervants, becauſe they have a natural roughneſs of manners, and their minds are not poliſhed by education, are abſurd. They might as well complain, that watches and trinkets are not found in mines, nor girandoles in rocks of chryſtal.

LETTER XI.

GEORGE begins to walk about the room; but he will not be happy till he has regained his entire liberty: for nothing is ſo irkſome to him as an idle life. You know his activity, and

that he cannot continue in one place long. Old as he is, he would yet keep pace with the alerteſt youth. I cannot deſcribe his extreme impatience during the three weeks of his confinement to his bed. He has been ſo peeviſh, no one could ſatisfy him. I have read him ſome fairy tales to calm his mind. With theſe he was enchanted, and cried out with enthuſiaſm, "Could I but read, I would never have any other books."

I obſerved that, what moſt attracted his attention was the marvellous; caſtles of gold and ſteel, or gardens of chryſtal, with ſpeaking trees, &c. All the reſt excited but little attention. The ignorant, like the deaf, are inſenſible to all but the moſt ſtriking objects.

Wondering at the effect of all this imagery, I was deſirous of knowing whether it had not raiſed in his mind ideas

ideas of luxury, that might ultimately deſtroy his happineſs. "George," ſaid I, "would you like to have ſuch a caſtle as that here deſcribed?"—"No, certainly," ſaid he, "It is not riches that can make a man happy, but health and good ſpirits; and there is leſs of theſe in palaces than in cottages. How I pity thoſe unfortunate men, who, becauſe they have a little more gold than their neighbours, fancy themſelves obliged to do nothing. They are a thouſand times leſs happy than their ſervants. They procure for the latter the greateſt bleſſing of life, which is employment, and only keep for themſelves their wearisome idleneſs. Thus the ſervants are always gay and happy, while the maſters paſs their days and nights in gaping and liſtleſſneſs."—"Very well, George, I was afraid the imaginary riches of the fairies had

ſeduced you."—"They have amuſed me," he replied, "becauſe they are extraordinary, and make one laugh; but I do not wiſh for them. 'Tis juſt as if I went to the fair, where I am much diverted with ſeeing Punch; but if he only walked quietly about as I do, he would not attract my attention. I had much rather be George than Punch.—"Then," ſaid I, "you do not look for inſtruction in books, and inſtead of talking rationally, you would only have them divert you like Punch or Harlequin."—"Certainly—what elſe are they good for?"—"They teach the ſciences."—"The ſciences? and what are they good for?"—"To obſerve the laws of nature, to calculate the courſe of the ſtars, to diſcover the cauſes of the phenomena that preſent themſelves every day, ſuch as thunder, lightning, rain, hail, &c. to ſtudy the mechaniſm

of

of animals and plants—in ſhort, to unveil all the ſecrets of the creator." —"And do the authors of theſe books chat and laugh with the ſtars and plants?"—"No: but they take great pleaſure in their ſtudies. I aſſure you their occupations make them very happy."—"Very happy, truly, to have no companions but trees and ſtars! Pray, ſir, are they not a little touched?"—"How ſo, George? do you know what you are ſaying? They are univerſally admired for their profound ſtudy and extenſive knowledge." —"Well! let them paſs their lives in obſerving the moon, and ſtudying *'ſparagraſs* and cabbages; for my part, I am content to eat them without troubling myſelf how they came. I laugh and ſing with my companions, and am happier than all the learned men in the world."—"It appears then, George, that you have no very

high opinion of the ſciences; but there are other books more uſeful for you, becauſe they are more intelligible, and more nearly concern your happineſs. There are works on moral philoſophy, that teach us to know mankind, and particularly to detect bad people, who artfully maſk themſelves under ſo many ſeducing appearances."—"There requires no great wit to do that."—"You talk very lightly of it, George, but be aſſured it is the moſt difficult of all arts. There are treatiſes on moral philoſophy, that have coſt five and twenty years of reflection."—"Ah! that's good! five and twenty years to write a book to teach the knowledge of men! What loſs of time! I'll anſwer for it, with all their reflection, they teach no great matter. I believe, ſir, it is not neceſſary either to read or write books to know the people we live with. For

me,

me, a week's obſervation is ſufficient. I preſently ſee whether a man is gay or melancholy, open or reſerved, ſincere or falſe, good or bad, clever or ſtupid; and yet I could not explain, in a ſatisfactory manner, or write down all I ſhould have obſerved of him. Theſe things may be felt in an inſtant, but would take an age to expreſs.—Suppoſe, for inſtance, I obſerve a tree. I am immediately poſſeſſed of a complete idea of the form of all its branches and leaves; but, if I would deſcribe it in a book, I ſhould be quite at a loſs—this branch is in ſuch a form, that in ſuch another—oh! I ſhould never have done—and, at laſt, I ſhould give no idea of the tree. The minds of men are as various, and as complicated, as trees, They are equally incapable of being deſcribed by words, and can only be known by being ſeen. Theſe authors

muſt ſurely, ſir, be ſad fools, to paſs whole ages in teaching imperfectly, what every one may know perfectly well without them. I am really afraid, this philoſophy is ſome diſorder that deranges their poor heads; for, if they were in their ſenſes, they would ſurely prefer paſſing their time gaily and joyouſly with their friends, to growing pale over their writings, and producing a uſeleſs work. I am afraid, ſir, you are yourſelf an unfortunate victim of this diſorder; for you are always ſhutting yourſelf up like a priſoner, and your appearance ſhews a melancholy that afflicts me. The leaſt thing in the world diſtreſſes you. Have I not, a hundred times, ſeen you weep at embracing a child, or beholding an old man? And yet, I ſee nothing afflicting in that. Surely it is not natural to do ſo. Theſe ſciences, I am afraid, are very dangerous

gerous things. I wiſh I had the powers of the fairies. I would cure you of theſe venomous ſtings, and give you the cheerfulneſs and the ignorance of poor George. Then you would be happy, and that is the only thing that is wanting, to make me ſo."

This is a ſample of my converſation with poor George. Judge, my dear friend, whether he has not good ſenſe and a good heart, and whether he does not deſerve my regard. He is not aware, that, with his own natural underſtanding, he is a hundred times more a philoſopher than the majority of our proud literati, who borrow their thoughts from others, and reſemble children who have dreſſed themſelves in men's cloaths. This confirms me in the opinion, that Nature is the only guide we ought to follow, and the only one that really conducts to truth.

truth. As long as men ſhall abandon her wiſe and ſimple inſtructions, to purſue their vain imaginations, they will but loſe themſelves in an infinite and ſteril labyrinth of inſurmountable difficulties, the work of ſophiſtry and error.

George is at length recovered, and to-morrow I ſhall ſet off on a happy pilgrimage to my land of promiſe.

LETTER XII.

At length I am arrived at my humble reſidence. It was here, that amid the tranquil pleaſures of a country life, my faculties firſt began to develope, and the affections of my heart

to

to ſport with my new-born ſenſes:—pure and ſimple education of nature! uncontaminated with the fatal maxims of the world, that lead man perpetually aſtray, and eſtrange him from the true objects of his deſtiny!

My dear friend, how can I deſcribe to you the affecting portrait of theſe worthy people, who received me with tranſport, and crowded round me in an extaſy of joy, ſtriving who ſhould give me the ſtrongeſt proofs of their tenderneſs and love. They were as happy to ſee me, and expreſſed their joy with as much energy and ſincerity, as if they were receiving at once a father, a brother, a friend, every thing that could be dear to them, newly riſen from the dead. From the morning of my arrival they have never quitted me a moment, and I believe they would have ſet up all night, without thinking of time, if I had

had not taken notice, it was paſt midnight. Then, recollecting I muſt want reſt, they all accompanied me to a ſmall room deſtined for my uſe during my ſtay, and we ſeparated.—I wiſh you could but ſee my little cabin. It contains a bed, which, though without curtains, is neat, and ſtands againſt a wall covered with childrens' drawings, a large old faſhioned eaſy chair, an old cheſt, grown black with age and ſmoke, and a rickety old table. To me all this is charming; and I feel happier in this hole, than all the princes of the earth in the moſt magnificent palaces.

I would willingly deſcribe to you my journey, before I go to reſt, but I grow ſleepy, and muſt defer it till to-morrow. I ſhall then threaten you with a long letter.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

I AM this very moment riſen, though the day ſcarcely begins to dawn. The early lark, commiſſioned to call the villager to his labor, has juſt awakened me by his melodious warblings. But, though I have not indulged in all the neceſſary ſleep, I am highly recompenſed by the moſt enchanting ſcene that ever charmed my ſenſes. The ſun has already diſperſed the dark ſhades of night, and exhibits nature in all the beauty with which ſpring can adorn her, and enlivened with that early verdure whoſe ſhades and tints are ſo delicately varied. On one ſide, the laughing hills cloathed with vines in bloom, promiſe a rich vintage to the laborious huſbandman. On the other the thick herbage

bage of the meadows, almoſt courts the mower's ſcythe. A little farther, high mountains, crowned with foreſts, open on a diſtance compoſed of vaſt plains, where innumerable herds are feeding. All theſe objects are animated by ſhepherds playing on their pipes, and the ſongs of milk-maids, that, on every ſide, re-echo through the air, and give a thrill of pleaſure to the ſoul, unknown in the infected atmoſphere of crowded cities.—But I am loſing myſelf in my reveries and contemplations, and forget the principal ſubject of my letter.—My dear Dormeuille, pity my weakneſſes, and hear them with patience. You ſee I am always the ſame, always the ſport of my unbounded imagination, which the moſt trifling object ſeduces; for it purſues every chimera, and, as Montagne obſerves, often reſembles a horſe that has eſcaped from the bridle.

But

But let us abandon this being, whom neither experience nor reaſon can reſtrain, and let us ſpeak of my journey.

I left my chaiſe at the neareſt town, and came the two laſt leagues on foot, determined not to viſit this part of the country like the great, riding over it poſt-haſte. Figure to yourſelf, my dear friend, my ſenſations in the midſt of theſe peaceable village habitations, witneſſes of the playful joys of my early infancy; ſcenes which I have been ſighing to re-viſit for the laſt ten years. Each tree, each houſe, I remembered, made me palpitate with pleaſure; and I ſhould have thrown myſelf on the neck of every peaſant I met, had I not feared they would have taken me for a madman. My emotions encreaſed as I approached the object of my expedition; and when I beheld the cottage of good old Richard, I could proceed no farther without

without reſting. My knees bent beneath me, and my breath was ſo diſturbed, I could not advance a ſingle ſtep. No, even a lover could not be more agitated, delighted, and tranſported at the ſight of his beloved's dwelling, than I was on approaching the cottage where I was foſtered. I beheld it at the extremity of a long narrow lane, between two hedges of hawthorns, in bloom, which, croſſing and interweaving their tufted branches, formed a kind of lengthening bower, exhaling the moſt delicious perfumes. What charms this ſcene poſſeſſed! What tender thoughts it raiſed within my boſom! The ſerenity of the ſky, the light ruſtling of the foliage, the many beautiful ſpots I beheld around, the lowing of the herds, the ſight of that dear country, where I imbibed with my milk the love of nature and of virtue, the frank

frank and amiable reception I was about to experience, the increaſe I ſhould find in Richard's family, (for his children were now, no doubt, fathers and mothers of families) the pleaſure I ſhould receive in embracing their little ones—all—all, my dear friend, plunged me into a moſt delicious reverie.—Oh! what an advantage does not refined ſenſibility give, over the common lot of mankind! This divine emanation, which ſo far ſurpaſſes my comprehenſion, creates in us, as it were, a new ſet of organs and of faculties, and multiplies to infinity, our thoughts and our affections. How it extends our being, and annihilates every thing that is impure and groſs! it unveils to our improved ſenſations, the ſublime wonders of nature, from the ſmalleſt inſect, to the moſt immeaſurable ſtar; and, as the higheſt of all benefits, confers

fers on us a heart capable of love. How I pity thoſe, on whom Heaven has not beſtowed this precious boon! Cold and inanimate themſelves, the magnificent ſcenery of nature, and the enjoyments of a tender heart, are incapable of affecting them, and they would not even ſuſpect that man is ſuſceptible of emotion, if ambition and ſordid intereſt, did not ſometimes awaken them from their lethargic apathy.

My dear Dormeuille, our brilliant Marquiſſes,, whom Faſhion has painted as breathing the moſt delicate ſentiments, and who glory in talking of them, would, I believe, but ridicule my ignorance if they read my letters. How they would exerciſe their ſatirical irony, if they ſaw me ſeated on the graſs, tranſported with joy at the ſight of a homely cottage! Theſe fine gentlemen may laugh as much

much as they pleaſe, at finding there ſtill exiſts ſome ſenſibility in the human heart. I am happy in being ſo much out of faſhion, to cheriſh, with as much tenderneſs as poſſible, the good old cottager, who nouriſhed me with her milk, and warmed my heart with her affection.

Theſe reveries at length reſtored tranquillity to my ſenſes, and continuing my road, I preſently entered my little cottage. I there ſaw a young ſervant girl whom I did not know, employed in dreſſing ſome meat, and the father of Richard, an old man, eighty years of age, ſleeping in a great wicker chair, in a dark receſs, between the chimney and an old brown bed, adorned with various deſigns, conſiſting of true lovers' knots, and images of ſaints. The young girl told me, in a whiſper, (for fear of waking the old man) that Richard and all his people were at work in the

the fields, but would very ſoon return, as it was almoſt dinner-time. I, therefore, ſat down facing the good old Henry, rejoicing that Time had ſtill reſpected his age. With what tranſport ſhould I have thrown myſelf into his arms, had I not feared to diſturb his peaceful repoſe! His venerable countenance exhibited that calm ſerenity, which is the ſtrongeſt proof of the purity of the mind. Not ſo the guilty ſleep. Horrid ſpectres continually haunt them, and convulſive agitations declare their internal torments. But the ſlumbers of the good reſemble the unruffled lake, whoſe gloſſy ſurface reflects, without diſtortion, a cloudleſs ſky.

Every thing I beheld in this cottage, the caſement that looks upon the garden, the ruſtic table, Margaret's old preſs, the little dairy in the corner, all recalled to me my paſtoral days.

days. "At day break," thought I, "I began to run acroſs the fields to tend the flocks, or labor at the harveſt, and returned at night, with our little family, forgetting the fatigues of the day in a ſimple and frugal repaſt, rendered delicious by health, appetite, and perfect contentment. After ſupper we ſat round the fire, Margaret ſpun, while Richard, his ſervants, the children, and myſelf, picked hemp, and Henry, in his great arm-chair, read ſome paſſages from the bible, by the light of an iron lamp ſet in a hole in the chimney. The old man would ſometimes break off, and taking off his ſpectacles, explain the ſenſe, or the moral inſtruction of the ſacred text, and exhort us to profit by it, that we might always continue to be eſteemed and loved.

I was enjoying theſe ſoothing remembrances, when the girl broke

them off by crying out, " there they are, Sir," and immediately I ſaw Richard coming up to me. He ſtopped and looked at me, but could not recollect me. I threw myſelf on his neck, " What, Richard," ſaid I, " do you not know me?" My manner and my voice aſſiſted his memory, and he cried out, " 'Tis Julius." All repeated, " Julius, Julius," and crowded round me, embracing me with tranſport, and repeating their careſſes again and again.

This reception, which was a little noiſy, awoke the aged Henry, who enquired, with ſurpriſe, what had happened? Richard then took me by the hand, preſented me to his father, and, raiſing his voice, ſaid to him, " It is Julius, your little Julius, that you are ſo fond of, and ſo often talk about. He remembers us, and is come to ſee us." " Ha! ha!" ſaid the

the good old man, ſmiling and extending his arms, "'Tis my dear little Julius! Come, my dear child, and let me embrace you." He put his venerable cheeks againſt mine, and laviſhed a thouſand careſſes on me with his trembling hands, ſaying, "How glad I am to ſee you, my dear boy! See," ſaid he to Richard, "what a fine handſome youth he is grown! I always ſaid he would do us credit. Look at him, Margaret. Is he not a charming youth? Are you not very happy to have given him your milk?"—"Oh! yes, father," replied my good nurſe, "for he always had a good heart, he always loved us dearly."

I was ſo affected, that I could not ſpeak; but my ſilence was more expreſſive of the tranſport I felt, than any words I could have uttered. My pleaſure, however, ſuffered a mo-

mentary interruption. When our firſt joy was ſubſided, they ſeemed aſhamed of their familiarity, and endeavoured to compenſate it by a more reſpectful manner: they even aſked my pardon for their freedom, ſaying, "the pleaſure of ſeeing me, had made them forget the reſpect due to my rank. "My dear friends," ſaid I, "do not diſturb yourſelves, or think about an empty reſpect, the enemy of friendſhip and confidence. I am always the ſame I was before, your Julius, your child, and your friend. For God's ſake, forget that rank, which is only formed to dazzle little minds. Love me, I entreat you, too much to be able to reſpect me." At length they reſumed their natural eaſe and chearfulneſs once more reigned in every countenance.

As I began to feel a want of food, I was glad to obſerve that Margaret and

and her daughters were preparing to ſatisfy my hunger. The preparations were not long, for they had not to cook a variety of dainty diſhes to pleaſe the palate of a great man, but to ſet out food for plain country folks, who live in all the ſimplicity of nature, and love each other with ſincerity. Brown bread, ſome vegetables, eggs, and milk, compoſed our whole repaſt.

At table I had an opportunity of conſidering them more at leiſure; for, till then, I had ſeen them in too confuſed a manner. Henry ſat at the middle of the table: His grey hairs and pale complexion, his ſunken eyes, which, however, ſometimes ſparkled with pleaſure, formed an affecting contraſt with the freſh and brilliant health of the reſt of the family. Margaret appeared exactly the ſame as when I left her. The active and

healthy life of the country, is, doubtleſs, a more certain means of prolonging youth, than the indolence and coſmetics of faſhionable ladies. Margaret was always jolly, neat, full of intelligence, ſomewhat paſſionate, and fond of talking. But ſhe has not loſt one of the good qualities in which her little faults are forgotten. Richard has equally well preſerved his air of kindneſs, his open manners, and his gaiety and ſprightlineſs of diſpoſition. His two ſons, Lewis and James, are exact counterparts of him. There is no difference between them except that of age. They have both acquired a prodigious ſtrength in agricultural labor, and I beheld them with a degree of admiration. "Thoſe nervous arms," thought I, "will one day be the ſupport and ſolace of their parents;" for, among theſe ſimple and virtuous cottagers, the firſt and happieſt

pieſt of duties, is that of filial love, and to compenſate, in their turn, the pains beſtowed on them in their youth. I then reflected on thoſe monſters, who, loaded with gold and with crimes, abandon an affectionate mother, whoſe fortune they have exhauſted to raiſe themſelves to grandeur, leaving her in miſery and affliction, weighed down with age, neglect and poverty. Such a contraſt would have made my blood boil in my veins, had it not been ſoothed by the charming picture before me. Richard's three daughters, Cecilia, Blanche and Annette, were well adapted to give birth to ſofter ideas. Their freſh and roſy complexion, their modeſt, yet animated eyes, their ivory teeth, all united with an inviting openneſs of countenance, to form three beautiful ſiſter-faces, that might triumph over the moſt diſtinguiſhed beauties. They were ſeated

near Henry, and reſembled the union of ſpring and winter. When they embraced him, I ſeemed to behold the roſe bud in the midſt of ice and ſnow.

As I viewed this intereſting family, where an ancient ſimplicity ſeemed to reign, the ſcenes of my infancy were renewed. I again beheld my tender parents, my amiable companions, my beſt friends: and the emotions they gave birth to were ſo affecting, that I could not repreſs my tears. They were grieved to ſee me weep, and enquired the reaſon with the greateſt anxiety. I then told them all I knew of my own hiſtory, and they participated in my ſorrows with the moſt lively intereſt. But, when they learned that the remembrance of my early infancy was one of the principal cauſes of the tears I ſhed, they could not help weeping alſo, and I had again

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the pleaſure of ſeeing their hearts overflow with the ſweet thrillings of friendſhip. They all came to embrace me, and aſſured me, in the moſt impreſſive manner, how tenderly they loved me, and how happy they ſhould be, could I paſs my life in their cottage.

You, my dear friend, who know my ſenſibility, will eaſily imagine what I felt during this affecting ſcene. I expreſſed my gratitude as well as I could, and communicated the too powerful motives which ſeparated me from them. Obſerving that this ſubject made me ſerious, they turned the converſation to other topics, and we continued our repaſt. I admired the attention and kindneſs, Henry received from every one. Margaret preſſed him to eat another plate of cream, aſſuring him it would do him no harm, and Richard added,

that his wife was in the right, and preſſed him to eat, ſaying, "That was the way to keep up his health and ſpirits. The girls too employed their eloquence, which always ſucceeded. They accompanied their kind ſolicitations with kiſſes, and the old man ſeemed to expand with pleaſure, while he yielded to their requeſts.

Richard, happy to ſee the old man ſmile at their marks of attention, gave a ſignal, when all, with one accord, drank the health of Henry; and when they had a l repeated, "Henry's health," they named the reſt of the company, always beginning with that of myſelf.

My dear Dormeuille, though I held but the ſecond place, I was not jealous. I have always felt a kind of friendly veneration for the aged. There is ſomething that melts and attaches the heart to them, in a degree that belongs

belongs excluſively to thoſe worthy images of ancient virtue. I aſked Richard why he had not yet married any of his children. He replied, "Oh! there is no hurry. Indeed," added he, "If I wiſhed it, (looking archly at Cecilia, who bluſhed, and caſt her eyes down upon her apron ſtrings) nothing would be more eaſy." I ſoon diſcovered that Cecilia was in love with a youth, whom they would not ſuffer her to marry, becauſe he was poor. Richard, whom I blamed for his ſeverity, anſwered very wiſely "that it was through tenderneſs for his daughter that he oppoſed her wiſhes. They are both poor," ſaid he, "and if I let them marry, they will be quite miſerable. But, if a few years hence I ſhould be able to aſſiſt them, I will bring them together with pleaſure, becauſe they love each other, and are both virtuous; for it is

virtue and love united that make marriage happy." I eaſily overcame the obſtacle to this union, by promiſing Cecilia a ſum of money ſufficient to procure her a property equal to that of her father; and I added the ſame promiſe to her ſiſters and brothers, whenever any of them ſhould marry. My dear friend, do but imagine the joy theſe trifling gifts occaſioned. I was overwhelmed with thanks and bleſſings. If the rich did but know the pleaſure of making others happy, with what eagerneſs would they not renounce their inſipid pleaſures, to ſpread happineſs through whole families of the indigent, and taſte for once the unſpeakable delight of deſerving the affections of mankind!

The wedding will be ſolemnized at the cloſe of Autumn, and I have promiſed to be preſent. I aſſure you,

you, nothing ſhall deprive me of that pleaſure.

This day was deſtined for all the delights of ſentimental enjoyment. They ſhewed me a flute that hung from the ceiling, "You ſee," ſaid Richard, "the flute you played on ſo prettily, when you tended the goats with Cecilia and Lewis. When the Marquis d'Oſſan tore you from our arms, we were in ſuch a conſternation, following with our eyes the carriage that ſnatched you from us like the wind, and then crying becauſe we could no longer ſee you, that we did not perceive you had forgot your flute. My children were all rejoiced that it remained, and ſaid it would at leaſt be a keep-ſake for their dear brother. 'We will play on it,' ſaid they, 'and it will remind us of the pleaſure of having him with us.' But, fearful it ſhould be loſt or broken,

broken, I hung it to the beam, and forbid any one to touch it, till we ſhould ſee you again. Every night we looked up at it, and talked of you. My children would often aſk me, 'Father, where is Julius gone?' I told them, I knew nothing more of you than they, but that I doubted not you were rich and happy, and ſometimes thought of your old friends." 'Then, why does he not come to ſee us?' ſaid they.—'Becauſe, no doubt, he is a great way off,' ſaid I.'—'How far?' ſaid they, 'ſurely, if we knew where to find him, we would go to ſee him without minding the diſtance.'—'Certainly: but, no doubt, there are reaſons that prevent his coming, which we do not know. Have patience, my children, I am confident he will always love us, becauſe he has a good heart, and great ſenſibility.'

"Such,

" Such, my dear Julius, were our conſtant converſations concerning you, and, I even made a point of preſerving your little working coat, which the Marquis made you take off, to dreſs you in a more brilliant manner. I muſt ſhew it you, to prove how fond we are of every thing that belongs to you. Margaret, go and fetch it."

Figure to yourſelf, my dear friend, the pleaſure I felt from all theſe proofs of their attachment, expreſſed in a manner ſo natural, and unaffected, particularly the little coat and the the flute, which I could not avoid bedewing with my tears.

Richard ſaid, they muſt dance to the flute, in celebration of my return, and led us all into the garden behind the houſe.

I found this garden juſt in the ſtate in which I had left it. It was filled with every kind of vegetable, and inter-

interſperſed with rural flowers, ſowed here and there by chance. At the end was a fountain ſhaded by willows, and near the middle a large pear-tree, whoſe extenſive branches covered a large plot of ground, and afforded ſhelter againſt the noon-tide heats.

They all joined hands round the pear-tree, while I remained in the middle, and played upon the flute. With what pleaſure did I ſee them dance! Henry was himſelf of the party, though his trembling knees but juſt ſupported him; and though he was dragged along, as it were, his head and arms kept pace with the violent jumpings of his grand-children. "It is a long time," ſaid the good old man, "ſince I danced laſt. Come," added he, "it will do me good;" and then he balanced and trilled out the air they danced to, and made them begin again.

You

You can form no idea, my dear Dormeuille, of the gaiety that ſmiled in every countenance. I participated their enjoyment; for nothing ſo eaſily ſpreads as the hilarity of innocence. In the faſhionable world, there is a kind of formal and ſplendid gaiety of etiquette, which produces but tranſient impreſſions, and inſtead of entering the inmoſt receſſes of the ſoul, ſhuts up every avenue to the heart.

To avoid fatiguing the old man, I put an end to the dance, and we all ſat down round the pear-tree. I took this opportunity to aſk them a thouſand queſtions concerning their little farm, and all their domeſtic affairs. I found that, with the produce of a very few acres, and of their own labor, they lived perfectly happy and contented, nor could I prevail on them to accept any addition

dition to their means. "Your generoſity," ſaid they, "gives us great pleaſure, and we are very grateful for it; but we cannot accept it. Leave us, my good friend, in our humble ſtation: for were we richer, who knows but we might become leſs happy?"

Surely, my dear Dormeuille, theſe peaſants are the beſt philoſophers: for when did our proudeſt moraliſts exhibit ſuch exemplary wiſdom? True philoſophy--the real art of happineſs does not conſiſt in learning by heart, volume upon volume, of writings that cannot ſatisfy the heart, and whoſe contradictions are dictated by vanity and oſtentation; but in adopting a life of nature, a ſimple and frugal life and uncorrupted manners, where friendſhip reigns in all her tendereſt forms. Let Nature—Nature alone be our inſtructor. Her dictates breathe

pure

pure philoſophy. Free from every prejudice, and from every injurious paſſion, ſhe points infallibly to good, and never miſleads her votaries.

Thus did I reſpect the peace and happineſs of this contented family, ſo worthy of every enjoyment, who placed their felicity in the union of their affectionate hearts, and the contempt of a baſe corruptive metal, which only loads us with chains, and multiplies our privations.—I then aſked them, whether, during the period of my nurture, they had never learned any thing, that might give me a clue to the circumſtances of my birth. Richard replied, that he knew very little on that ſubject. "All I remember," ſaid he, "is to have ſeen here, two or three times, a lady, accompanied by the Marquis d'Offan. They always ſent the children away, and only ſuffered my father, my wife,

and

and myſelf, to remain. The lady careſſed you much, notwithſtanding your cries and ſtruggles to avoid her. The ſugar-plums and play-things ſhe brought could ſcarcely pacify you. At that time you were but five or ſix years old. The emotion ſhe felt while ſhe held you in her arms, made us ſuſpect ſhe was your mother, and the myſtery with which they concealed every thing that regarded you, led to conjectures concerning your hiſtory, which you have now confirmed. Her fine dreſs, her noble mien, her ſoft and delicate voice, and her graceful manners, clearly ſhowed her to be a perſon of conſequence, and that ſhe was very young; but we never were able to diſtinguiſh her features, becauſe ſhe always wore a long white veil, that extended to her waiſt. She ſeemed often to fix her attention on the gold medal, that hung to your neck

neck by a blue ribband, and on which were ſome letters we never could underſtand. As ſhe looked at them, ſhe wept, and then, raiſing her eyes towards heaven, ſighed out a few words we could not hear; but which, no doubt, expreſſed her grief, for ſhe ſpoke them with the moſt mournful accent."

I interrupted Richard by my tears, "Ah!" ſaid I, "it was no doubt my mother, who held me in her arms, and I murmured at her careſſes! Oh, God! grant that I may one day throw myſelf at her feet, and repair the faults and blindneſs of my infancy." I begged Richard to continue.

"Whenever the lady came to ſee you," ſaid he, "ſhe generally ſtaid two or three hours, which made you very uneaſy, and ſhe never quitted us without leaving an abundance of preſents:—

ſents:—money for Lewis and James, muſlin for my wife and my girls, cloth to make a coat for my father, and wine for myſelf. We have only drank a ſingle bottle of it to the health of that kind and generous lady, praying heaven to remove the ſorrows that ſeemed to afflict her. The reſt I have kept, leſt any of us, or of our neighbours, ſhould be ill. Happily, however, we have never had occaſion to touch it. Lewis and James have bought two fine cows with their money, which have made us quite rich, by the quantity of milk, and the number of calves they have produced. The benefits conferred by virtue, always lead to happineſs. See, my dear friend, there they are in yon little meadow."

Without making the leaſt reply, I leaped over the hedge that ſeparated the garden from the meadow, and

ran towards the cows that were bought with the money given by my mother. With what tranſport I careſſed them! I then requeſted Richard to accept the value of two other cows, which I deſired him to purchaſe as ſoon as poſſible, and never to ſeparate them from thoſe of Lewis and James. The union of theſe animals was to me ſo delightful an idea, that it is impoſſible to expreſs it. It made me hope for that of ——. Oh! Dormeuille, what a ray of hope!

You will laugh, perhaps, at my childiſhneſs, and yet I am ſure it is perfectly natural. The unfortunate fix their minds on any thing that has the leaſt relation to their ſufferings. At a diſtance from the object that affects them, they know no greater pleaſure, than to feel their ſenſibility awakened by its reſemblance, or ſome aſſociated idea. A ſimple flower that produces

produces ſuch ſenſations, is to them of far more value than the rareſt diamond.

In ſuch converſation the remainder of the day was conſumed. I could never ceaſe to queſtion Richard regarding my mother, and was deſirous to know every thing, even to the colour of her ribbands. His information reanimates my confidence, for I found in what he told me, the ſtrongeſt coincidence with my dream. Her noble generoſity, her tenderneſs, the ſweetneſs of her voice.——Ah! Dormeuille, can it ever be, that my prayers and vows will be anſwered?

LETTER XIV.

IT is now two days ſince I have been ſeparated from my ruſtic friends. I aſſure you, it required all my reſolution to leave them, ſo ſtrongly was I urged to continue my ſtay, not only by their kind ſolicitations, but by my own heart, which never felt ſo happy as with theſe worthy peaſants. But they had awakened a new hope, and I could no longer repreſs my deſire to continue my reſearches and my travels. The ſad moment of parting at length arrived. I brought away my working dreſs and my flute, which I did not obtain without difficulty; and they all accompanied me to the town, where my carriage remained. Even the aged Henry rode in a little cart drawn by a poney. The ſilent ſadneſs that

prevailed among our little party, ſeemed as if we were attending the funeral of our deareſt friend. Scarcely a word was ſpoken; and when we arrived at the place of our ſeparation, I embraced them all, while tears trickled from every eye. At length, I entered my carriage, after renewing my promiſe of returning to the wedding of Cecilia, and drove off: thinking throughout my journey of this worthy intereſting family, who felt ſo lively a concern in my happineſs. But what affected me moſt, was the aged Henry. His image, at the moment of my laſt adieu, was conſtantly preſent to my mind, ſeated in his little cart, with melancholy countenance, while tears ran down the furrows of his venerable cheeks.—Ah! how the remembrance afflicted me! how my heart miſgave me, and whiſpered, we ne'er might meet again. At my return home,

home, George diverted my mind from its mournful tone by his affectionate reception. Yet George did not receive me in perfect good humour. He was ſeriouſly angry, that I had been abſent ſo long. "Did this little journey," ſaid he, "that was to take but three or four days, require a fortnight? You have no idea, ſir, what a dreadful alarm you have cauſed me. I thought ſome misfortune muſt have happened, and was going to ſet off in ſearch of you, though I did not know whither you were gone.—But, enough—you did not even think about poor George's uneaſineſs. That is the way with young folks. They come and go, and nobody knows where to find them. They think of nothing but their pleaſure, and care not how much pain they give to thoſe who love them."

What could I reply to ſo juſt a reproof? I could make no anſwer. In ſuch caſes, to confeſs our neglect is the only reply: To repent, and propoſe to ourſelves a juſter conduct in future. 'Twas thus I acted, and I believe George, at length, forgave my want of conſideration.

I could not contemplate even his paſſion without pleaſure. Every angry look, every diſtorted geſture, were to me the ſweeteſt careſſes, becauſe they proved to me his attachment. What a difference, my dear Dormeuille, between George and our faſhionable *petits maitres*. This rough hewn worthy is, in fact, a lamb that wears the ſkin of a tiger, while thoſe coxcombs, with their amiable ſpeeches and gracious ſeducing manners, are but monſters, that tear every one in pieces whom they find in their power. The more I obſerve mankind, the more I am convinced,

vinced, that in proportion as they depart from ruſticity and ignorance, they approach corruption and depravity. You will be ſatisfied of this, ſhould you ever need a friend among the moſt elevated ranks, whether of birth or ſcience. The reaſon of this melancholy truth is eaſy to be perceived. We cultivate the mind, yet neglect to deſtroy the germs of vanity. What is the conſequence? Theſe fatal germs open, and ſpread ſo rapidly, that they deſtroy all the virtues by their baneful influence; for theſe are ſlow in coming to maturity, and tender and delicate in their nature. Thus it is, that the great, the brilliant, and the witty, generally loſe their taſte for innocence and ſentiment. Solely occupied with themſelves, and panting for every thing that will add to their conſpicuouſneſs, they are but feebly attached by the bonds of friendſhip, which the

ſlighteſt motive prompts them to burſt aſunder.

P. S. A propos. How did you get over my long letter, in which I had ſo little mercy on your patience. How many days did you employ in reading it, and how often were you interrupted by gaping and ſleep? You muſt, at leaſt, acknowledge my ſkill in preparing ſoporifics.

Yet believe me, my dear Count, I ſhould be ſorry you underſtood me quite ſeriouſly; for I have too much ſelf-love to think my letters are irkſome to you. No: 'tis impoſſible your friendſhip ſhould admit of it. That benign divinity of human life ever chaces away the liſtleſs languor of indifference, and ſpreads a charm over objects otherwiſe the moſt inſipid. You, my dear Dormeuille, who feel all her animating influence, are, like me, ſupremely happy when you receive

ceive a letter from your friend?—A friend!—the very name inebriates my ſoul with pleaſure. Pure and ſacred ſource of happineſs and joy! how many exquiſite enjoyments would bleſs mankind, did they but know the delights thy votaries receive!

My dear friend, why are ſome of our modern writers ſo unintereſting? 'Tis becauſe they are ſtrangers to reciprocal affection, and prefer the empty luxury of wit to the inexhauſtible pleaſures of ſentiment. They would bluſh to be thought guilty of ſimplicity and truth, and fearing to be accuſed of poverty, they trample Nature under foot, to eſtabliſh Art upon her ruins. Their works reſemble our gardens in France, where every thing is cut out into groteſque ſhapes, or disfigured with formal parterres and ſtraight unnatural lines; and where it would be

impoſſible to paſs a quarter of an hour, but in the moſt inſupportable diſguſt.

Adieu! I ſhall ſet off in a day or two to pay you a viſit.

LETTER XV.

DO not expect to ſee me yet. A recent incident retards my departure. But above all, do not accuſe me of indifference. Read my letter, and ſay whether it is in my power to leave this ſpot.

This morning I went out to take my laſt farewell of the Sylvan Gods and Dryads of the country, and offer the homage of gratitude to thoſe enchanting divinities for all the pleaſures I have enjoyed. Nor did I neglect the little

little grotto, where I have paſſed ſo many happy moments, abandoned to the wildeſt range of my melancholy thoughts. 'Tis at the ſummit of a high mountain, in a receſs between magnificent rocks, that defend it from rain and tempeſt, and afford an intereſting view of an immenſe extent of country. Its floor is a rough gravel, and the only vegetables that ſurround it, are briars and heath. 'Twas in this wild ſpot, I often came to meditate my ſorrows, or elevate my ſoul with Young or with Oſſian. The raviſhing chimæras of the bard bore me to his heavenly regions, peopled with real friends; (regions, alas! too imaginary!) and the profound grief of the philoſopher conſoled me, by the tears of ſympathy I ſhed.

After ſtaying there ſome hours I returned down the mountain's ſteep, as full of ſorrowful impreſſions, as if I left

my only happineſs among the wildneſs of the ſcenery. Figure to yourſelf, my dear friend, the extreme ſenſibility that attaches me to the moſt inſignificant objects. 'Tis enough, that I have ſat two or three times upon a ſtone, or have ſeen a blade of graſs ſpring up, to fix my affections on thoſe inanimate beings. Alas! I fear this ſenſibility will one day be fatal to me.

As I croſſed the valley at the foot of the mountain, I obſerved, a few paces from me, a very intereſting picture; two children, of from four to ſeven years old, playing with a goat. The elder of them was riding upon it, and exerting all his ſtrength, to aſſiſt the younger to mount, and the little fellow ſtrove, in every poſſible way, to get up, but all to no purpoſe. At length, however, he made a grand effort, and lay

lay acroſs the neck of the animal, in a very awkward poſture, but the poor child could not change it. Obſerving this, I was going up to aſſiſt him, when, unfortunately, the timid animal, who till then had ſtood with the utmoſt patience, ran away, and threw both the little creatures on the ground. They immediately began to ſcream horribly, although fear was the only injury they ſuſtained. I inſtantly took them up and pacified them, but a new ſubject of tears now ſucceeded. That tender age is conſtantly undulating between grief and joy. The little one had loſt an apple out of his pocket in the fall, and as ſoon as he ſaw it, would have run after it, but his brother, more alert, ſeized it, and ran away. This drove the little fellow to deſpair, who, with his eyes brim full of tears, implored my aſſiſtance. All my eloquence,

however, was fruitleſs, for the impudent little thief laughed at my interceſſions, and ate the apple without pity. I gave the child a few halfpence to buy ſome more. He ſoon brought ſix, and ſheltered himſelf under my protection, while he put them in ſecurity from the rapacious enemy. While he ate his apples I queſtioned him regarding his age, his name and his amuſements, to all which he anſwered with the moſt engaging ſimplicity. He told me, he had two white rabbits, which he was feeding to ſell at the market, and that with the money he ſhould get for them he would buy medicines for his father. I was going to praiſe his tenderneſs, but he did not allow me time. "Come, and I will ſhew them you," ſaid he, ſmiling, and without waiting for my reply, he took me by the hand to ſhew me his rabbits, not

doubting

doubting I ſhould be charmed with the ſight of them.

When we came to his home, what a heart-rending ſcene preſented itſelf! In a corner of a poor ruinous cottage, almoſt ready to fall, lay a young man, totally exhauſted by ſickneſs, on a crazy truckle bed. His ſunken eyes ſcarcely retained the ſparks of life, and his ſhrunken and livid ſkin ſcarcely covered his protruding bones, or concealed the motion of his muſcles.—Such was the ſhocking ſtate of this unfortunate father. His wife, who attended and endeavoured to conſole him, had a countenance replete with ſoftneſs, and retained the remains of beauty, which wretchedneſs and grief had not yet been able to deſtroy.

I was anxious to learn the cauſe of the misfortunes of this family. The father had been ill above a year of a

ſlow

ſlow fever, which had ſunk them all into the deepeſt miſery, by depriving them of their only ſupport, the produce of his labour. The neighbouring lord had afforded them ſome trifling aid, but in ſo harſh and oppreſſive a manner, that they had preferred an increaſe of ſufferings to repeating their applications. There remained no other reſource than the induſtry of Alice, who every morning went to the town to ſell the vegetables and flowers of their little garden, which ſhe was obliged to leave her huſband's bed to cultivate. In winter ſhe ſpun night and day, but, in ſpite of all her exertions, the produce of her labour was inſufficient. She had two children to ſupport, who could do nothing, and to procure medicines for the ſick man, which were expenſive.

With what indignation did I hear, that the doctor came but once a month and

and that theſe unfortunate people had never received from him any other aid than his arrogance and his quackery! He viſited them in a ſplendid carriage, made a diſguſting parade of his affluence, dictated a few ſcientific, but uſeleſs dogmas, and promiſed to make ſolicitations, and take ſteps for their benefit, of which they never experienced the effect.--Such was the only ſolace this doctor afforded, this contemptible automaton, on whom, it is ſaid, the public beſtow their conſideration.

They ſeemed to receive new life from my hands, when I gave them what was ſufficient to procure for the invalid, every neceſſary, and to afford the worthy Alice the repoſe ſhe needed; for the poor woman was quite exhauſted with fatigue. Theſe worthy people knew not how to expreſs all the gratitude they felt, or how ſufficiently

ficiently to thank me. Alice threw herſelf on her knees, and the ſick man ſtretched out his feeble arms to me, and wept.

After ſtaying a long time with this unfortunate family, I quitted them, and promiſed to bring a compaſſionate and enlightened phyſician on the morrow, and to aſſiſt them till the poor man ſhould be able to reſume his labour.

As I returned home, I met the Baron de Gomelle, taking a ſauntering lounge. It was about ſeven o'clock. "Why did you not come and dine with me," ſaid he, "as you promiſed? you have reaſon to regret your ſhort memory, I aſſure you. We had ſome of the fineſt women in the whole town. 'Tis true, you are inſenſible to all their charms. You had rather go and degrade yourſelf among a parcel of peaſants, than taſte

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all the delights of the moſt elegant ſociety. My dear friend, this ſavage kind of life totally ruins you. I am ſorry for it, for your diſpoſition is naturally eaſy and brilliant, and promiſed that you would be every one's delight; whereas, you make yourſelf half melancholy mad. If you did but know how you are laughed at for it, you would certainly reform."

As I made no reply to this harangue, he quitted me, adding, with uplifted ſhoulders, "Ah! Poor young man!" I walked on, and with a ſigh, in a low voice, exclaimed, "Ah! poor baron!" while I haſtened home to appeaſe my famiſhed appetite; for not having eat the whole day, I was faint with hunger.

Well, Dormeuille, ſay, can I yet ſet off; No, were it poſſible you could wiſh it, your deſires would not be complied with.

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LETTER XVI.

My patient begins to gain health and ſpirits, and to feel new life reanimate his frame; thanks to the worthy phi-cian, who, far different from the former, is highly eſtimable for his virtues, and his ſcience. It would be impoſſible ſufficiently to praiſe his care and attention to his unfortunate patient. Never has he omitted his daily viſit, which he conſtantly repeats in the kindeſt and moſt diſintereſted manner. He even refuſed to receive the ſmalleſt compenſation, rather chuſing, he ſays, to have the pleaſure of co-operating in my pious work. This worthy man, however, has far the greater ſhare in it. I only contributed my money, while he by his ſoothing words, and effectual aſſiſtance, has

has reſtored peace and health to the dwelling of miſery and deſpair.

Can you believe, my dear Dormeuille, that this invaluable phyſician is not liked in this town, and has very little practice or property? Ought he not to be the oracle of the whole diſtrict, and the favourite of Fortune? But, let us conſole ourſelves with the recollection, that Fortune is at beſt a proſtitute, who corrupts the virtue of thoſe on whom ſhe confers her favors. Let us even pray to heaven, to continue the worthy doctor in comfortable mediocrity.

The unfortunate patient has already recovered from his depreſſive fever, which had conſumed him for above a year, though it is but three weeks ſince I firſt ſaw him, and, I have no doubt, his being more comfortable in his mind and circumſtances, has contributed not a little to his recovery. Nothing is ſo inimical to health, as

grief

grief and miſery: and hence it is that the poor are moſt afflicted with ſickneſs. But, he is now getting well, and, with tranquillity of mind, and a nouriſhing diet, will ſpeedily recover his ſtrength. I am endeavouring to procure him a more certain ſubſiſtence than he at preſent poſſeſſes, for his day's work is but very ſcantily paid, and the ſmalleſt accident may deprive him even of that reſource, as he has of late too ſadly experienced. But, I cannot as yet ſucceed; thoſe to whom I have ſpoken of it, take ſo little intereſt in the unfortunate. Every one aſſumes a frowning aſpect, and ſeems uneaſy as long as I make them the ſubject of converſation. They aſſure me they will conſider of it, but never beſtow another thought upon the ſubject. Can it then be wondered, that the unfortunate are ſo numerous? Alas! the rich deign not

not even to talk of their ſufferings. They refuſe them even a look of compaſſion.

I do not, however, tell poor Mathurin and Alice of theſe diſappointments. On the contrary, I give them hopes. When unwelcome truth approaches the wretched, and threatens to torment them, it is but kind to oppoſe it with the innocent flattery of expectation.

Would to God, my dear friend, you could ſee this little family, ſo intereſting to every feeling heart. I never viſit them, but I feel affected even to tears. Alice ſaid to me, yeſterday, that "God Almighty had ſent me to relieve them. Alas! my good ſir," ſaid ſhe, "What would have become of us without your aſſiſtance. I was already beginning to loſe my ſtrength, and my ſpirits; I ſhould ſoon have fallen ſick myſelf, and

and then our poor children——" ſhe could ſay no more.

Apropos of the dear little creatures. I am reconciled to the eldeſt, who ſtole the apple, and I humoured the filial piety of the leaſt, by buying his rabbits, and perſuading him that it was the money they produced, that procured his father the means of recovery. The little fellow is in raptures at the good effect of his cares. Thus, you perceive, how generous and kind a heart he already poſſeſſes. It ſhall not, however, coſt him the ſacrifice of a ſingle pleaſure. I will take care his excellent diſpoſition ſhall not go unrewarded.

LETTER XVII.

PARTICIPATE, I beſeech you, the inexpreſſible joy I experience. My dear friend, Mathurin and Alice are now poſſeſſed of a ſubſiſtence, which raiſes them above the fear of want, and will render them and their offſpring happy. It is not, however, to me, they owe this important ſervice. Alas! I could only wiſh them ſuch ſucceſs. 'Tis chance has done all. I have now begun to entertain the greateſt veneration for that blind diſpenſer of the good things of this life. I will relate to you this happy event:

This morning, while I was viſiting the poor family, a poſt-chaiſe rapidly paſſed the cottage, but was immediately after ſtopped by a cart that lay acroſs the road, its axle tree having

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ing juſt then broken. It required an hour to remove the obſtruction, and there was no other means of advancing. A lady got out, accompanied by her maid, apparently with an intention of taking a walk in the fields, during the interval requiſite for removing the cart. She purſued a ſmall path which brought her near the cottage, and, perceiving ſome children at the door, that bore the marks of extreme poverty, ſhe entered. The indigence that reigned in every corner of this ruinous hut, and particularly the deplorable appearance of Mathurin, juſt recovering from his illneſs, excited in her the moſt lively compaſſion, and ſhe enquired, with earneſt anxiety, the particulars of their ſituation. Figure to yourſelf, my dear friend, my ſenſations, while Alice was deſcribing her misfortunes, and raiſing me, as it were, to the heavens with her immoderate

derate praiſes. I was, however, much more diſconcerted by the ſuperlative compliments laviſhed on me by this beautiful ſtranger, whom I found to be the Marchioneſs of Clermont. I quite loſt the command of myſelf, and felt, for the firſt time, the ſeducing, the irreſiſtible power of flattery. 'Tis ſo delicious a draught, that all deſire to taſte it, by whatever hand it is offered to their lips. How, then, could I reject the cup, when preſented to me by the Graces themſelves? How could a youthful heart like mine be proof againſt its ſweet intoxication? My dear Dormeuille, Heaven grant I may taſte it no more, for it might bewilder my reaſon—I might even become the coxcomb I deſpiſe.

Madame de Clermont, however, did not content herſelf with fine words. She proved the goodneſs of her heart

by giving part of the contents of her purſe, to theſe cottagers, and promiſed to take care of their future lot. She then returned to her carriage, and I to the town.

In the evening I was ſurpriſed by a viſit from Alice, holding a letter in her hand, and ſcarcely able to articulate. "Sir, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "do but read this letter." It was from Madame de Clermont, who offered to place this poor family in one of her farms, which, ſhe ſaid, was very productive, and would make them very happy, if they were but induſtrious, and underſtood their buſineſs. She added, that ſhe would employ her credit to procure them the advances requiſite to form their little eſtabliſhment, without the neceſſity of paying for any thing the firſt year. I thought I diſcovered through theſe obliging words,

words, that ſhe had an avaricious huſband to manage, who was but ill-diſpoſed to the ſacrifices of generoſity. I removed every difficulty, however, by promiſing to advance the neceſſary ſum. I then wrote a letter, in the name of Alice and Mathurin, to the generous Marchioneſs, to expreſs their gratitude, and communicate my own intentions with regard to them. You will eaſily conceive, I did not neglect the opportunity, to pay a tribute of admiration to the virtues of this amiable lady. In proportion to my diſguſt when the empty incenſe of flattery is laviſhed on women, whoſe only merit conſiſts in a few agreeable features, is my delight, when the juſt adoration of virtue, is paid to the union of beauty and beneficence.

Thus are my wiſhes accompliſhed, and this little family reſcued from the

moſt dreadful ſtate of miſery. Oh! that every unfortunate worthy, might receive ſimilar conſolations! Oh! that the children of ſenſibility might no longer mourn over ſuffering humanity!

LETTER XVIII.

My dear Dormeuille, you wonder at the number of the ſacrifices I make, and fear I ſhall at laſt impoveriſh, and ruin my fortune. Do you reckon me, then, among thoſe egotiſts, of whom the world is ſo full, who think honor obliges them to diſſipate all their property, and even that of others, in horſes and carriages, in jewels, and a thouſand other futilities, the neceſſity of

of which can only find a place in their frozen unfeeling hearts. My dear friend, you muſt have a very contemptible opinion of me, to ſuppoſe I could not eaſily ſpare at leaſt half of the 20,000 livres I annually receive. You will readily imagine, that with 10,000 livres well employed, I might ſmooth many a care-worn brow, and give conſolation to many a diſtracted heart. How little does it coſt to make a poor wretch happy, whoſe higheſt ambition is the poſſeſſion of a morſel of bread! Alas! how many are there, who cannot even obtain that pittance!

Unfeeling great! Quit for a moment your haughty palaces, your ſplendid tables, covered with a conſtant ſucceſſion of the moſt delicate food; and learn the pleaſures of ſenſibility, in the obſcure retreats of indigence. Come, and behold the

worthy parent, to whom you have cruelly refuſed the ſmalleſt relief. Behold the deſpair you have impreſſed upon his features. See how his numerous children ſurround him, crying for the bread he cannot give, to ſatisfy their famiſhed appetites. See the unhappy partner of his wretchedneſs, juſt delivered of a new heir to miſery, and ready to leave him to bear alone his accumulated griefs—her laſt ſigh trembling upon her pallid lips.—Turn from this afflicting ſcene to yon rolling equipage. 'Tis the bauble of a duke and peer of the realm, haſtening to pay a tribute of 10,000 louis d'ors to his miſtreſs; or, rather to the woman whoſe favors he has hired for ſo much per month. The next is a financier, ſtudying new means of adding to his treaſures. He is followed by a coxcomb, who is hurrying to diſplay his graces and his luxury

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in the brilliant circles of faſhion, in order to learn how he muſt dreſs himſelf to-morrow. — Behold, and feel all the horror of the contraſt! Feel, at leaſt for a moment, the emotions of compaſſion in your obdurate breaſts.

But, to return to your prudent caution. I confeſs my purſe will be very light, when I have paid Cecilia's portion, and Mathurin's eſtabliſhment; for, they are not the only calls I have had. In fact, I intended to have borrowed ſome money of you, had not George offered me 8,000 livres that have juſt been left him, and which I have accepted. I know you will be jealous of this preference. Yet it was but juſt, to remember that the firſt year of your marriage will require a thouſand extraordinary expences. Your building alone will be ſufficient to

ſtreighten you. But George is a ſingle man, and, living with me, cannot be in any immediate want of his money, which I ſhall find extremely uſeful towards continuing my travels; for I do not forget—Ah! Dormeuille, how is it poſſible to forget them?—I think of them continually, and theſe reflections oppreſs me with an irreſiſtible melancholy. If there are moments, when I appear to reſume my gaiety, be aſſured my heart is not the leſs overwhelmed with grief.

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LETTER XIX.

MATHURIN is at length ſettled in his farm, together with his wife and children. They were brought to it by the Marquis and Marchioneſs of Clermont, who came for them in their carriage. I was alſo of the party. At our arrival on the eſtate of Clermont, all the peaſants ſurrounded us, and accompanied us to the caſtle, crying continually, "Long live the Marquis and Marchioneſs. Clermont for ever," &c. The Marquis gave a *fête champêtre* to the whole village, and made Mathurin and Alice king and queen of the feaſt. This abſurd ceremony was ſufficient to ſhow the character of its inſtitutor. The proud and haughty can ſcarcely give a *jous* to a beggar, but they would willingly aſ-

ſemble ſpectators from every corner of the earth.

The Marchioneſs appears more modeſt than her huſband. Her air of confuſion and concern at this empty pomp, convinces me, her heart is full of the pureſt love of virtue. True generoſity never ſeeks to be obſerved. Baſhful and aſhamed of her overflowings, ſhe ſhrinks from every attempt to penetrate the veil of ſimplicity and ſecrecy, with which ſhe ſtrives to hide her lovely features.

P. S. Before I ſet off, I muſt unavoidably pay a viſit to the Marquis and Marchioneſs, in gratitude for the attentions they have paid me. Beſides, I ſhall delight to ſee poor Mathurin commence his new eſtabliſhment.

LET-

LETTER XX.

I AM now become an inhabitant of Clermont Caſtle; for, you muſt know I had the good fortune to pleaſe the Marquis ſo much during my firſt viſit, that he immediately began to treat me as his boſom friend. He offered me, in the moſt cordial manner poſſible, the uſe of his houſe, till the hot ſeaſon, which obliged me to continue in this part of the country, ſhould be paſſed. "In ſummer," ſaid he, "the town is deſerted and unintereſting. You like the country, and ſeem partial to this neighbourhood; why not come and ſtay with us, till the weather renders travelling more pleaſant? Be aſſured, your viſit will be an acceſſion to our pleaſures. This oblig-

ing offer I accepted with the ſame frankneſs with which it was made. The Marquis, indeed, on the whole, pleaſes me much, notwithſtanding his faults. 'Tis true, the good he does is accompanied with oſtentation, but this weakneſs is compenſated by many amiable qualities. And, what does it ſignify how good actions are performed, provided they are performed at all? Would to God that human vanity never had any other object but beneficence and generoſity!

LET-

LETTER XXI.

You muſt not expect this will be an intereſting letter. I am diſappointed and unhappy. Here I was in hopes of enjoying a few moments of repoſe, and ſaid to myſelf, "after ſo many fatiguing journies, and a life of wandering and ſadneſs, I have the conſolation to find myſelf in the boſom of a happy family, where peace and domeſtic harmony, reign with undiſturbed tranquillity. My heart, fatigued with fruitleſs wiſhes, and the diſappointments I have encountered, will now recover its ſtrength and energy, in the happieſt repoſe. Vain dreams of a deluded imagination, ever at variance with truth and reality!

My dear friend, this Marquis, to whom I was ſo ready to grant my eſteem,

eſteem, appears unworthy my regard, now that I am better able to appreciate his character. I aſſure you I ſhall quit his houſe, with as much eagerneſs as I firſt entered it.

Figure to yourſelf a veteran colonel full of arrogance and ambition, whoſe thoughts are conſtantly employed on the great offices he pants for, the intrigues of the court, and the pleaſures of the capital; and who, after having been poſſeſſed of 100,000 livres a-year, is now obliged to bury himſelf perpetually in the country, which he abhors; becauſe his follies having reduced his fortune to a tenth part of that ſum, leave him no other choice of life. Theſe diſappointments have ſo ſoured his temper, that he is a tyrant to every one around him. At firſt, however, he deceives with falſe appearances; for his manners are gay

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and lively, his converſation witty and elegant, and the habit of frequenting the beſt company, has taught him to ſpeak with judgment on every ſubject. He appears equally ready on the moſt abſtract ſciences, ancient and modern languages, general literature, politics, and moral philoſophy. But a little cloſer obſervation diſcovers, that this dazzling erudition is limited to a ſuperficial paucity of ideas, which are borrowed from others, and perpetually recur. Some men there are, who have never opened a ſingle volume to ſtudy for themſelves, but have gleaned here and there, from the converſations of men of learning and talents, a few important truths which they conſtantly employ, like pence and farthings, on every common occaſion. Suffer them quietly to count over their ſmall change, and they

they appear to ſatisfy every wiſh; but, aſk them for others, and, they are quite at a loſs. Theſe men are averſe to diſpute and diſcuſſion, becauſe all their knowledge, their judgment, and their talents conſiſt in the mere jargon of memory. The minds and converſation of ſuch men reſemble a number of leaves, torn from various works, and heaped together without order or obſervation.

If theſe men were merely ignorant, they might be pardoned. But, as contradiction quite deranges them, they treat you with inſult, for want of ideas; thinking, the way to gain the victory, is to have the laſt word. —Juſt ſuch is the Marquis of Clermont. He cannot tolerate the leaſt diſſent from any thing he is pleaſed to utter. The leaſt reply awakens his rage, and he immediately becomes a fero-

ferocious tiger, who puniſhes you for ſpeaking the truth.

His character is ſtill more viſible by obſerving his actions, and purſuing him through the details of domeſtic life, in which men naturally throw off the maſk, and ſtrip themſelves of all the tinſel, and artificial virtues in which they are dreſſed out, to exhibit themſelves to the world. I will relate to you a ſcene I witneſſed two days ſince, which will make you pretty well acquainted with his character.

During ſupper his valet, Robert, a man of ſixty years of age, who has ſerved him with aſſiduity and attachment above twenty years, returned from the town, where he had been upon a commiſſion from the Marquis. The affair had not terminated in a manner favorable to the wiſhes of his maſter, owing to ſome unavoidable circumſtances. Upon this the Marquis, wholly engroſſed

engroſſed with the diſappointment of his hopes, and unable or unwilling to inveſtigate its cauſes, began to find great fault with poor Robert, and put himſelf in a violent paſſion. The ſervant, deſirous to juſtify himſelf, was ſtating the facts at length, when his maſter imperiouſly interrupted him. To defend, however, the probity of his conduct, which the Marquis had wounded by the moſt offenſive language, he ventured to offer ſome further obſervations, in the mildeſt accent, and the moſt reſpectful manner. "Sir, you forget"——"I forget nothing," replied the Marquis, with a voice that froze the blood in all our veins. He then went on abandoning himſelf to his rage, and uttering a thouſand unmerited inſults againſt ſervants in general, whom he ſeemed to place far beneath the beaſts of the field, and particularly againſt the

the unfortunate Robert. "Thoſe inſolent old raſcals," ſaid he, "believe, forſooth, they may ſay and do any thing, becauſe they have eat their maſters bread a little longer than their neighbours."

The poor old man who was fatigued and wet with his journey in the rain, left the room with tears in his eyes. I was in a conſternation, as was every one elſe in the houſe. At length the Marquis, perceiving, no one replied to him, was ſilent: and as every thing had now ſubſided, I began to look around me, to obſerve what paſſed. The Marchioneſs appeared extremely afflicted. Her down-caſt eyes, and the anguiſh that furrowed her brow, added a new intereſt to her natural goodneſs and mildneſs of diſpoſition, and proved at once her deep concern, that her huſband ſhould forget his manhood, even

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to the violation of decency, of juſtice, and of humanity; and her grief at ſeeing an old ſervant, whoſe age and whoſe virtues deſerved ſo much reſpect and eſteem, treated in ſo unworthy a manner. The children ſcarcely dared to breathe. Theſe three charming little creatures, whoſe countenances were lovely and intereſting, engroſſed all my attention. At intervals, they ſtole a trembling glance at their papa, whoſe paſſion was totally unintelligible to them, and then at their mamma, as if deſirous to aſk her what was the matter. Sometimes they looked at each other, and then hid their little faces behind their hands to laugh and make ſigns. The Marquis was out of patience at their innocent little play. He ordered them to keep ſilence with ſo terrible an air, that the children ſeemed rooted to the ground.

ground. But, unable long to continue in that attitude, they forgot the Marquis's orders, and renewed their little amuſements; when this inſenſate parent, whoſe ill-humour only ſought a pretext for breaking out anew, got up with a countenance full of rage and fire, and ſtruck with conſiderable force, firſt the children, and then their mother, who endeavoured to protect them from his malice. He then quitted the room; fortunately, perhaps, for himſelf, for I now loſt all patience, and was very near making him pay very dear for his brutality. Never did I feel my blood ſo heated, or my whole frame ſo agitated: but the affecting reflections of Madame de Clermont, her tears, and thoſe of her children, melted my fury into tenderneſs; and, unable to avert the torrent of her misfortunes, I endeavoured at leaſt

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to alleviate them, by ſhedding with her the tears of ſympathy.

What an angelic ſoul does this charming woman poſſeſs! Far from complaining, though, alas! ſhe had but too much reaſon, ſhe endeavoured to excuſe the error of the Marquis. I perceived her intention, and liſtened with the reſpect that is due to a mother, who is willing to throw a veil over the faults of him who gave her children life.

Such, my dear friend, is the man with whom this ſweet, generous woman, whoſe temper and diſpoſition are ſo amiable and mild, is obliged to paſs her life. What a torment! 'Tis the union of a tiger with a gentle and tender dove. I am confirmed in my opinion, that his heart is totally deſtitute of every good quality, for the next day after this diſguſting ſcene, far from being abaſhed with regret and ſhame, he was quite

quite happy and ſerene; and not even imagining I could be diſguſted, he ſpoke to me in the gayeſt manner, without the leaſt idea even of compenſating his errors.

Adieu, my dear friend, for the preſent. I had a thouſand things to ſay to you, but it grows very late. Night, that attends to no man's wiſhes, is haſtening away, without even waiting for me to finiſh this converſation with with my friend.

LETTER XXII.

I AM continually thinking of this Marquis, and reflecting on his unworthy character. Yet, notwithſtanding his errors, I pity him, becauſe he is un-

unhappy. Ever diſcontented and complaining, he is a burden to himſelf and to all around him. Such is too often the effect of the education we receive. Our new-born paſſions are dazzled with fortune and grandeur; we ſee incenſe and flattery hovering in their train, and the conſequence is, that we trample on every virtue to attain theſe idols of mankind. But, if any unforeſeen event obliges us to deſcend from our elevation, we ſee nothing but evils and privations in that mediocrity, where we muſt be *men*, to feel our true happineſs.

Would you believe, my friend, that it is poſſible to live with ſuch a character. None but an angel could bear it, or, rather, none but Madame de Clermont. She affects ignorance of her huſband's faults, and behaves as if he had none. 'Tis her conſtant practice to ſtudy his wiſhes in their moſt

moſt remote and ſecret ſources, to do nothing without conſulting him, to utter nothing that can diſpleaſe him, and to arrange every thing ſo as to render contradiction unneceſſary. In lieu of appearing diſguſted at his tyranny and injuſtice, her ſweetneſs is the more unruffled and the more affecting. Her only anſwer is a modeſt acquieſcence, with the downcaſt eye of ſubmiſſion. Sometimes, it is true, an unwilling tear eſcapes, in ſpite of her exertions to ſuppreſs it—Ah! my dear friend, what an adorable woman! How much her lot affects and depreſſes me!

Would to God I had never entered her houſe. Ever ſince I have been here repoſe and tranquillity have abandoned me. A crowd of horrid thoughts diſtract my ſoul, and plunge me in the deepeſt melancholy. What a fatality attends me! Always ſur-

rounded by the unfortunate, in a ſtate of ſuffering myſelf, and perſecuted by the moſt tormenting events, without ever enjoying even the tranquil happineſs which nature confers on the loweſt of mankind.

Though I am convinced it is neceſſary I ſhould leave this place, I fear a precipitate departure will be a bad return for the politeneſs I have experienced. Madame de Clermont honours me with her eſteem, and a ſhare of her confidence. She perceives the intereſt I take in her ſituation, and often ſpeaks of it with a ſort of emphatic frankneſs, which proves how much ſhe needs the relief of confidential friendſhip. What then would be her opinion of me, if I quitted her ſooner than the time I fixed, for no other reaſon, than becauſe ſhe is unhappy? She would think me a ſelfiſh wretch, who flies every place where pleaſure is a

ſtranger.

ſtranger. She would think me inſenſible to the ſufferings of others, and incapable of the common feelings of humanity.—I ſhould be inexcuſable. Allow me, then, my dear Dormeuille, ſtill to prolong my viſit.

LETTER XXIII.

THE more I obſerve the character of Madame de Clermont, the more perfections I diſcover in her. Others may poſſeſs her talents, her ſcience, and her beauty, but her tender and compaſſionate ſoul, her candour, her graceful and noble mien, her amiable diſpoſition, that unequalled attraction, which gives a warmth of colouring to her whole perſon and manners, and

inſpires every one with reſpect and veneration, from the firſt moment of her appearance; theſe are qualities I have never found ſo eminently combined in any other woman.

Her converſation is extremely intereſting. She never utters that empty flow of umeaning words, or betrays that love of female aſcendancy and power, which ſpring from a puerile mediocrity of talents; but, rather excels by the reſerve which belongs to wiſdom, and that modeſt exerciſe of reaſon, which diſtruſts its own concluſions, in proportion to the depth of its reflections. Thus ſhe inſtructs and pleaſes without ſeeming to intend it. Although ſhe poſſeſſes a decided ſuperiority over every one around her, ſhe is unconſcious of it herſelf, or perceives it, but to enable thoſe to ſhine whom her powers would otherwiſe eclipſe. To the timid ſhe is the beſt

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interpreter of their ideas, and a woman who wiſhes to appear beautiful and witty, finds no one more ready to admire her. Thus every one without exception, even the moſt frivolous and faſhionable belles, love her with ſincerity and affection. In this reſpect ſhe might almoſt be accuſed of coquetry; as it is the moſt certain means of enſuring her own triumphant ſuperiority; while the pleaſure ſhe manifeſts, and even her affectionate reception of every viſitant, would add weight to the accuſation. But a more intimate knowledge of her character, will prove it to be merely the effect of her goodneſs of heart, which leads her chearfully to ſacrifice her own pleaſure to that of others. This has become ſo confirmed a habit, that it would be impoſſible for her to act otherwiſe. Hence it is that ſhe endures the violent paſſion of her huſband, and en-

deavours, by innumerable attentions, to meliorate the unhappy lot of her domeſtics; who would otherwiſe be ſoon tired of his oppreſſive yoke. Add to this the abſolute neceſſity of concealing her ſorrows, and exhibiting to her children an unſullied picture of peace and content, ſo indiſpenſible to the education of the infant mind, ever injured by a continual view of affliction and misfortune.

It is eaſy to perceive through this appearance of kindneſs and complaiſance, ſo invaluable in the female character, that her leading paſſion is the love of her children. With them ſhe paſſes every moment ſhe can command, and her mind is wholly occupied in promoting their infantine pleaſures, or providing for their permanent happineſs. Having no other object of attachment to divide her heart, all her thoughts and wiſhes center

center in them alone. In their careſſes this worthy mother forgets her ſorrows; in them ſhe ſeeks all her enjoyments. Neither does ſhe betray that inexcuſable partiality, which corrodes and deſtroys the tender bonds of fraternal love, and ſows the ſeeds of hatred and misfortune among the neareſt relations. All her children are equally dear to her, all receive the ſame attention at her hands, and the ſame careſſes from her lovely lips.

She alone conducts their education, and diſcharges that important office in the moſt exemplary manner. You ſhall judge of it yourſelf. Aſtoniſhed at her undertaking the taſk, and deſirous to diſcover whether ſhe knew its vaſt extent, I had a very intereſting converſation with her on the ſubject.

"The education of children," ſaid I, "is the moſt important of all arts.

Our firſt ideas, our earlieſt habits, fix our future character, and their influence, be it good or evil, continues through our whole life, without a poſſibility of prevention. 'Tis an art attended with the greateſt difficulties, and long, very long, have men vainly attempted to overcome its early bias. Rouſſeau himſelf, however ſublime his genius, almoſt trembles at their contemplation.

"I do not pretend," ſaid ſhe, "to contradict the great man you ſpeak of, nor to criticiſe the principles laid down by any writer, ſtill leſs to form a ſyſtem of education. My knowledge is not ſufficiently extenſive for that taſk. I admire and love the author of Emelius, for his purity of ſentiment, and depth of thought, which ſeem to ſpring immediately from Nature herſelf. Yet, perhaps, he was wrong in ſpeaking of our duties, in ſo diſcouraging

raging and ſo awful a manner; for he has thereby made parents deſpair of fulfilling them. In conſtant fear of committing errors, and dreading the conſequences of thoſe which are unavoidable, they no longer venture to think for themſelves, and merely learn by wrote the maxims of Rouſſeau. To apply theſe on all occaſions, appears to them a ſufficient guide, whereas the effect, in lieu of anſwering their expectations, is generally oppoſite to their wiſhes. Thus diſappointed in their hopes, out of humour with their ſyſtem, ſcarcely knowing what they do, they are convinced a good education is impoſſible, and that Rouſſeau has only uttered a ſeries of theoretical paradoxes, abſolutely impoſſible to put in practice.

" I have purſued a very different method. The work of Rouſſeau appeared to me full of valuable truths,

with which, however, it was leſs important to load the memory, than to employ them in forming our mind, and directing our reflective powers. By tracing them to their ſource, and obſerving the firſt principles from whence they flow in the cleareſt and moſt eaſy manner, I was enabled to recur to them when neceſſary, and thus every difficulty vaniſhed from my mind.

It does not require a very brilliant genius to educate children well. To render that qualification neceſſary, would not accord with the wiſdom of Nature. The females of birds afford their young every care and every inſtruction their helpleſs infancy demands, without committing the moſt trifling error. Why ſhould not woman poſſeſs the ſame maternal inſtinct, and in that perfection, which our ſuperior organization admits. Nature, indeed

indeed, has given us the impulſe, but our prejudices and our inſtitutions, efface it from the mind, and ſubſtitute a deſtructive vanity in its place. Pure maternal love, when combined with ſweetneſs of temper, and a good underſtanding, excels the dogmatical maxims of the moſt brilliant ſyſtems. 'Tis the only guide we ought to follow, the only rule that is infallible.

" I ſpeak from my own experience. My children have had no nurſe, no governeſs, no inſtructor, but myſelf. They are not prodigies of learning and accompliſhments, but they are good and happy, and that is all I wiſh. In theſe objects I have ſucceeded without difficulty. Convinced, with Rouſſeau, that children enter the world free from every vice, I have permitted their minds to unfold of themſelves, removing them from what-

ever might injure their uncorrupted minds, and keeping them conſtantly under my own eye. This ſtrict attention, far from being a reſtraint on them, has been the means of procuring them every pleaſure. Of all the individuals they ever ſee, no one loves them ſo well, or beſtows on them more tender careſſes than myſelf; no one contrives for them ſo many enjoyments, or bears their noiſy mirth with more patience. They have no need of harſh commands, but run to me the moment they ſee me, and ſcarcely quit me without crying. How could I prevail on myſelf to interrupt the happineſs of theſe intereſting little creatures, to fill their heads with a crowd of irkſome ideas, and their memory with words which, ſeeming deſtitute of meaning, are for that reaſon, very ill learnt. I had rather my children could not read, than ſee them learn

learn amidſt tears and grief, and trouble.

" I perceive, by your ſurprize, that you accuſe me of exceſſive indulgence. You are miſtaken. Remember what I have ſaid.—What occaſion can I find to improve or correct perfect innocence? How ſhould they have any faults? Nature has given them none, and I endeavour only to perform good actions in their preſence. How then ſhould they become liars, or learn to be diſobedient and idle? I never talk to them of taſks or leſſons, or duties to be fulfilled, nor do they ever receive from me, the leaſt reproof. All they ſay, all they do, all they learn, proceeds entirely from their own free will. I neither reſtrain their liberty nor their pleaſures, and they cannot feel the ſmalleſt motive to deceive me.

"Do not imagine this method makes them ignorant. My daughter, who is but nine years old, knows enough of muſic to ſing accurately, and accompany her voice with the harp. She ſpeaks Italian like her native tongue, and draws very prettily for her age. Her two brothers poſſeſs nearly the ſame accompliſhments, though leſs perfectly, becauſe they are younger. A mother has many ways of inſtructing her children, without tormenting them. Every thing ſhe does herſelf they are deſirous to imitate. My children ſaw me playing on my harp, and immediately they put their little hands on the ſtrings, and, finding they produced pleaſing ſounds, begged me to teach them to play. Every thing they know, they have learnt in the ſame manner.

I doubt

" I doubt whether all this attention can be irkſome to a mother who is really fond of her children; for with them ſhe finds pleaſures the world can never give. What a delightful enjoyment to ſee theſe lovely little creatures playing about! They are the gift of Nature to render man attached to life. How charming to watch the gradual unfolding of their reaſon, and liſten to their intereſting ſimplicity, which may often inſtruct even the wiſeſt philoſopher. How pleaſing to guard them from every prejudice and every vice, in a peaceful retreat, where their hearts may be open to filial and fraternal love, and to every noble ſentiment.

" Infancy is the age moſt worthy of our obſervation; for that alone preſents us with a picture of man in perfect innocence. Virtue is a fruit which rarely arrives at maturity, ſo many

many unfavourable winds blaſt it in the bud.

" Such, my dear ſir, is the method I employ in educating my children; which, though I deſcribe it to you without order, is ſimple, and eaſy to be underſtood. It would be uſeleſs to detail every particular, or exemplify its application to every incident. Your own diſcernment will render it ſuperfluous. You will perceive that it entirely accords with Rouſſeau, and that I have practiſed his maxims, though I have derived them from nature. For ſhe was his conductor, and always inſpired his pen.

" The only point in which I ſhall venture to blame him, is the air of importance he gives to the moſt trifling objects. The difficulties he talks of are mere illuſions. Though his recommendation to make the cleareſt and moſt ſatisfactory replies to the enquiries of children,

is very juſt, his maxim that we ought never to be the leaſt embarraſſed with their queſtions, I cannot adopt. When a child talks of things totally beyond the powers of its comprehenſion, what inconvenience can ariſe from ſaying, *I do not know*, or *I do not underſtand it?* Is it neceſſary to pretend to know every thing, when converſing with thoſe who are ignorant of every thing? and is it not better to give them examples of modeſty, than of vanity and conceit."

But I ſhall never finiſh this long letter. I have already ſaid enough to make you acquainted with this adorable mother. You will, readily acknowledge, my dear Dormeuile, that few women reſemble her, and that few poſſeſs ſo much ſweetneſs, ſo much wiſdom, ſo much true ſenſibility. I am certain you muſt already feel the moſt lively intereſt in her character.

Her

Her virtues give her a claim to your higheſt regard.

'Tis unneceſſary to tell you how much I love her, and that I feel as much concerned in her happineſs, as if ſhe were my own mother. The idea that I muſt ſoon quit her diſtreſſes me. My dear Dormeuille, how I love to flatter myſelf, ſhe reſembles her I ſeek! She is ſo good, and ſo charming, that I obſerve all her actions with a minuteneſs that would not permit me to loſe a ſingle emotion of her heart. Yes, every thing I behold in her correſponds with my wiſhes, and I feel that I have now more grounds than ever on which to proceed in my ſearch. She is the living picture of my dear mother, at leaſt of the mother I would deſire to find, and the reſemblance would, perhaps, be perfect, were not Madame de Clermont much too young. By her

her complexion, her beauty, and her features, I imagine ſhe cannot exceed thirty.

LETTER XXIV.

My dear Dormeuille, I cannot bear your raillery. When you talk of my being in love, you only laugh at the feelings of my heart. A pretty way with a friend you eſteem! Your ſtile is preciſely that of the faſhionable companies, where ſentiment is continually talked of, and happineſs declared to conſiſt in ſincere love, and genuine affection, while the trueſt friends are moſt perfidiouſly deceived, and the moſt ardent lovers moſt cruelly ridiculed. For God's ſake let us be ſe-

rious;

rious; I know your heart, I know its goodneſs, and that it is uncorrupted by the world. You love me; I am certain of it, in ſpite of your pleaſantry and humour.—Of this the dictates of your philoſophy are a pledge. They appear to me extremely judicious, but, 'tis pity they ſhould be unproductive.

I in love! In God's name with whom?—with a mother of a family, whoſe affections are excluſively devoted to her children—with a woman who is oppreſſed with grief and trouble, and would be ſtill more wretched, had her huſband the ſmalleſt cauſe of jealouſy. I ſhould but add to the number of her afflictions, and increaſe the bitterneſs of her tears. Ah! my friend! you are unjuſt.—No, ſhe rather inſpires me with reſpect and veneration, and her happineſs intereſts me even more than my own. I am never

never pleaſed but when I ſee her tranquil and eaſy, and am extremely circumſpect before her tyrant, that he may not perceive a ſingle glance, or any thing that would irritate his ſavage ill-humour. I would ſhed my blood, and make the greateſt ſacrifice of my own happineſs to ſpare her a ſingle ſigh. In a word I feel for her the affection of a friend, not the paſſion of a lover.

Her ſtate of health gives me pain. Though her appearance is conſiderably altered, ſhe will not acknowledge her uneaſineſs of mind. Adieu! I ſhall give you a further account of her in my next.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

I HAVE been unable to reply to your three letters till to-day. For this fortnight paſt I have ſcarcely had a drop of blood in my veins. Pity me, Dormeuille, ah! pity your too unfortunate friend. Oh! that I could receive your kind aſſiſtance, your ſalutary advice, and repoſe my ſorrows in your ſympathiſing boſom!

Madame de Clermont's health viſibly declines. She grows extremely pale, and her eyes are fixed, and deprived of their uſual luſtre. She ſeems at once to ſuffer corporeal pain and mental uneaſineſs. Her children affect her tenderly, and ſhe often weeps when ſhe contemplates them. Every one participates her griefs.—Ah! how keenly they affect me! Who can have

cauſed

cauſed ſo dreadful, ſo rapid a change? Perhaps her huſband—The wretch! Had he dared—but his heart is not bad. He even ſeems to feel for her ſituation.—Oh! that it were but the effect of remorſe! But ſuſpicion leads to jealouſy, and jealouſy in an ardent mind——Oh! I ſhudder at the thought.

Yet every thing concurs to convince me of it. For ſome time paſt ſhe affects ſeldom to ſpeak to me, and, as ſoon as her huſband goes out, ſhe is inacceſſible. Alas! till now what delightful interviews I have enjoyed, while taſting, without interruption, the pleaſures of her amiable converſation! She always ſpoke to me with confidence, and with a moſt intereſting ſenſibility. I improved myſelf by her extenſive knowledge, and by her ſimple and amiable philoſophy. To the pleaſures of reaſon, muſic often added

the

the charms of variety. It delighted me ſometimes to fill her place among the children; and they received my inſtructions with pleaſure. I joined in their innocent little ſports, and their gentle kiſſes were my higheſt pleaſure. My friend, this inexpreſſible happineſs exiſts but in the pictures of my memory. Some dæmon has deſtroyed the reality for ever.

Orders have certainly been given to terminate theſe intereſting, theſe charming interviews.—Yet the Marquis's manner towards me is the ſame as before. If he were diſpleaſed with me, doubtleſs ſome change would appriſe me of it.—What a perplexing uncertainty! My head is confuſed with innumerable contradictory conjectures, that ariſe, return, diſappear, and oppoſe each other, continually tormenting your poor friend with inexpreſſible agitation.

Dor-

Dormeuille, what ſhall I do?—You will ſay, take my departure.—That thought drives me to deſpair. Have pity on my weakneſs.—Yes: you underſtand me.—I knew not my own heart.

LETTER XXVI.

My misfortunes are at their height: I am unable to expreſs their acuteneſs. Who ſhall lend me that conſoling aid which might enable me to ſupport them, when even hope itſelf is ſnatched away?

You talk to me of my mother, and accuſe me of indifference and neglect. Cruel friend! Spare this weak, this too vulnerable heart.—But I ſee in your reproaches, the kind intervention

of friendſhip preſſing forward to reſcue me from the moſt violent of paſſions, and reſtore me to my moſt ſacred duties. My friend, theſe duties—I cannot proceed. Can you believe it? Is it poſſible?—Yes I muſt tell you all.

You remember in what inſupportable diſtreſs I wrote my laſt. This diſtreſs ſeems to laſt for ever; its cruelty increaſes hourly. I cannot find even a momentary interval of repoſe. Books, retirement, contemplation, all refuſe me the moſt tranſient relief. I wander like a madman in the woods, on the ſea coaſt, and among the wildeſt rocks, to hide from every eye my deep-rooted melancholy.

Theſe two laſt days, after having paſſed a ſleepleſs night, I roſe with the ſun, and went to taſte the morning air among the thickets of the

the garden. Soothed by the charms of a calm and ſequeſtered ſpot, and lulled by the murmurs of a neighbouring fountain, I fell into a delightful reverie. Scarcely had I begun to abandon myſelf to my reflections, when I beheld her by whom they were awakened, coming from the caſtle towards the place I occupied. Her ſtep was ſlow, and her head inclined gently downwards in a penſive attitude. My ſurpriſe and agitation almoſt took away my breath; but fortunately an intervening buſh concealed me, and I obſerved her without being perceived. She came and ſat down on a neighbouring ſeat, little ſuſpecting I was ſo near as to hear almoſt every word ſhe uttered. She drew from her pocket a manuſcript, which I immediately recogniſed. 'Twas the hiſtory of myſelf, which I had written by way of amuſe-

ment during my travels, and had lent her as an imaginary tale. It ſeemed deeply to intereſt her, and ſhe was frequently interrupted by tears, and ſometimes by profound meditations, pouring forth expreſſions which I could not hear, becauſe uttered in a very low voice. Figure to yourſelf, my dear friend, how much I felt at this moſt intereſting moment, perhaps the happieſt of my life. What unexpected tranſport ſuddenly changed the melancholy tenor of my thoughts!—Her emotions were by no means of ordinary ſtrength. They gave me an aſſurance——Ah! they gave me the moſt charming certainty—but my happineſs only laſted for a moment. A treacherous veil concealed the precipice towards which I was blindly haſtening, without apprehenſion of my danger.

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This too ſudden change, robbed me of my ſelf-command. I could not reſtrain the delirium of my joy, and in a tranſport of delight, I burſt from my retreat, and threw myſelf at her feet. Conceive the ſudden ſurprize of Madame de Clermont. She viewed me with aſtoniſhment, but could not utter a word. I was equally unable to articulate, for the palpitation of my heart robbed me of the power of ſpeech. I could only ſeize her hand, and cover it with kiſſes and with tears. In this attitude my boſom opening, diſcovered the medallion I have worn from my infancy. She ſcreamed, and ſunk lifeleſs in my arms.

Oh Dormeuille! what violent emotions did not your unfortunate friend experience? How many various ſenſations aſſailed me at the ſame mo-

ment! the pleaſure of preſſing to my boſom the woman I adored and loved, the pain of beholding her ſufferings, the conjectures to which her fainting gave birth, cauſed by the ſight of the medallion—But the deſire of recovering her prevailed over every other feeling.

I ſoon ſucceeded. When ſhe opened her eyes ſhe ſtared wildly around, as if ſhe had juſt awoken from ſome marvellous and affecting dream. She then fixed them upon me, and after a moment's pauſe cried out, "My ſon! my ſon!" embracing me with energy, and preſſing me to her heart: "Do I then again behold you? my ſon! my ſon!"

I attempted to ſpeak, but in vain. I could only expreſs myſelf in the tendereſt embraces. My dear Dormeuille, what a moment! 'Twas a moment

moment which firſt gave to my arms a mother, whom I had been ſix years ſeeking in vain.

As ſoon as our firſt emotions had ſubſided, you may imagine our converſation was intereſting, and time paſſed unperceived away. Little explanation was neceſſary on my part, for my written hiſtory had fully informed her of every thing. This, indeed, was the cauſe that had produced ſo ſtriking an effect upon her health; for, how was it poſſible not to tremble when ſhe beheld me under her huſband's roof. Neither in my mind could any doubt remain. Yet, notwithſtanding all this certainty, we could not ceaſe aſking each other innumerable queſtions, relative to events ſo mutually intereſting. She was anxious to know the hiſtory of my travels, my infancy, my education, and the worthy and reſpectable Marquis D'Oſſan;

D'Oſſan; circumſtances which could not be recurred to without a thouſand painful recollections. I was equally deſirous to ſatisfy my affectionate and allowable curioſity; and though ſhe endeavoured to conceal from me a part of her misfortunes, I had ſeen too much to be eaſily deceived, and at length became acquainted with their full extent. What important ſecrets were now imparted to me! The odious Clermont ſhould have paid with his life the ſorrows he had occaſioned, had not the moſt tender prayers been employed to appeaſe me. Alas! I was too well convinced of the neceſſity of diſguiſing my ſentiments to the Marquis; for what would he have ſaid had he known who I was?

I was participating the emotions of my virtuous mother, and we were mingling our careſſes and our tears, when—great God! what a ſurprize!

what

what a dreadful misfortune!—Clermont appeared, and beheld me reclining on the boſom of his wife. At firſt he ſeemed rooted to the ground; then, abandoning himſelf to paſſion and rage, he loaded with infamy and inſult the ſweeteſt and moſt virtuous of women.

I was beginning to defend her, when, fearing my indiſcretion would only encreaſe the evil by a diſcovery, and, preferring an appearance of criminality to the confeſſion of a dreadful truth, ſhe, in the moſt urgent manner, intreated me to leave her. "Leave you at this moment?" replied I, "'tis impoſſible. I muſt ſtay, and prove to your huſband the injuſtice of his ſuſpicions. He will learn"—— "I implore you," ſaid ſhe, "to make this ſacrifice to me and to my children." "I confeſs," ſaid the Marquis, ſmiling ironically,

" that it is a cruel ſeparation, but unfortunately it is indiſpenſible and preſſing. You underſtand me, ſir."

I anſwered this inſolent ſpeech by a look of indignation, and returned to the caſtle, my ſoul overwhelmed with deſpair.

George prepared my carriage, and we ſet off immediately. I cannot paint to you what paſſed within me during this journey. I was inſenſible to every thing. At night my ſtupor was ſucceeded by the keeneſt anguiſh, and I was ſeized with a violent fever, which ſtill confines me to my bed.

Such, my dear friend, is a haſty ſketch of my ſituation. You, who have ſo kind, ſo feeling a heart, will conceive its horror.

Oh! tender and virtuous mother! Have I then beheld you for a moment, but to render you more miſerable, and deſtroy your peace for ever?

ever? What is now your pitiable lot? Perhaps thy brutal huſband aims a ſacrilegious blow at the moſt virtuous of her ſex. Perhaps he has already deſtroyed her. What a dreadful idea! —My dear friend, I ſcarcely know what I write.

This morning I have diſpatched a perſon, on whoſe ſecrecy and fidelity I can rely. Could he but ſucceed!— Would but ſome divinity, who delights in protecting the unfortunate, favor the conveyance of my letter!— Might I but receive an anſwer!—I ſhould then be leſs miſerable. I ſhould know her real ſituation. My dear friend, unite your prayers, I beſeech you, with thoſe of the moſt affectionate and moſt wretched of ſons.

LETTER XXVII.

I HAVE had no news of my dear mother. My meſſenger is not yet come back. What can be the cauſe of this delay? Is it not a preſage of ſome new misfortune?—Alas! have I not already too many to ſupport?—My powers cannot long reſiſt ſuch accumulated grief.—That, indeed, is my only conſolation.

What do I ſee?—My mother on her knees—her cheeks deluged with tears. What monſter is that who caſts at her ſuch petrifying looks?—Who is it that dares thus to make her tremble?—Wretch that thou art, receive from my hand the puniſhment of thy inſenſibility!—But I ſtrike only the phantoms of imagination, and my own indig-

indignation and horror are all that are within my reach.

Almighty God! Wilt thou, who knoweſt her innocence, abandon her to the perſecutions of brutal injuſtice? Alas! her's was but the weakneſs of a tender heart. She is worthy thy paternal goodneſs, for ſhe is the moſt amiable, the moſt virtuous of mothers!

Oh, Dormeuille! what a dreadful preſentiment ariſes in my boſom!—What! muſt I for ever renounce—My ideas are confuſed—I am unwell—I cannot—Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

GEORGE to DORMEUILLE.

OH! Sir, make haſte and come to my maſter. I know not what to do. My grief takes away all my powers, and I ſcarcely know how to write. Your dear friend, ſir, my good maſter —how ſhall I deſcribe his ſituation? I'm ſure I cannot. Ever ſince we left Clermont his mind ſeems quite out of order. Sometimes a violent fit attacks him, and he does not know any one he ſees. His eyes are wild, and he talks as if ſomebody were with him. He is continually agitated, and often jumps out of bed, walks about the room, and threatens his nurſe and me with vengeance. 'Tis in vain I endeavour to pacify him; he does not hear

hear me: and nothing but fatigue, and his ſtrength being exhauſted, can make him calm.

Indeed, ſir, I am quite wretched. You, who love him, I am ſure will come and give him your aſſiſtance. Yes, ſir, come and ſave my good poor maſter.

The medicines of the doctors produce no effect; but I take one method which ſometimes ſucceeds. I know he loves children extremely, and therefore I bring the prettieſt and fineſt the neighbourhood affords to divert him. He careſſes them, gives them little preſents, and weeps over them while he kiſſes them and holds them in his arms. This ſeems to afford him ſome comfort. Oh! that I could reſtore his tranquillity! But I fear that will be a hard matter. You, ſir, know his heart; you know all his griefs; you know what ſenſiblity he poſſeſſes.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

DORMEUILLE to LEONORA.

I HASTEN to ſend my dear Leonora an account of our unfortunate friend. Since I have been with him he is much better. His fever is abated, his ſkin moiſter, and his mind more calm. The ſight of an old friend, a friend of his infancy, has produced a total change throughout his ſyſtem. He talks to me only of my own affairs, of my amiable Leonora, and of our happy eſtabliſhment; and theſe converſations make him forget his misfortunes, at leaſt for a moment.

This morning I was fearful his delirium would again return. He received a letter from his mother, which he has been expecting ſome days paſt with

with the greateſt impatience. The moment he ſaw it, he trembled violently, and could neither read nor articulate. He kiſſed the paper, and preſſed it to his boſom, looking at me with the greateſt emotion, and ſeeming to ſay, "I am about to learn the fate of my mother;" and then he melted into tears.

At length he recovered from his agitation ſufficiently to read the letter. The kind expreſſions of this ſweet and tender mother affected him in the moſt lively manner. But when he learned that he muſt abandon her for ever, nor indulge a hope of ever beholding his ſiſter, he gave himſelf up to the moſt violent deſpair. "Ah! my dear Dormeuille," ſaid he, throwing himſelf into my arms, "'tis over: the fatal blow is ſtruck deep into your friend."

I had the greateſt difficulty to recover him from this cruel ſtate of depreſſion.

depreſſion. At firſt, I thought reaſon and argument might have ſome power on his mind; but all my efforts were in vain, and I ſoon perceived this method was ill adapted to his agitated mind, which liſtened but to the dictates of ſentiment. I therefore ſpoke to him of friendſhip, and of every thing that could move and intereſt him. "Conſider," ſaid I, "the ſecret ties that bind you for life, even to thoſe from whom you are ſeparated; and the duties thoſe ties impoſe. Reflect, my dear friend, that their happineſs or their miſery depend, in ſome meaſure, upon your actions. What would become of them if they heard of your dejection and deſpair? Attend, then, to your health, and preſerve your life, if you would not that they ſhould die of grief. Madame de Clermont has children who require her maternal care. Spare that adorable mother

the

the pain of witneſſing the ſufferings of a ſon ſhe loves."

This converſation, which I continued as long as poſſible, produced the effect I expected. His ſpirits revived, and he promiſed to do every thing I ſhould requeſt. I have prevailed on him to paſs his days with us till his misfortunes ſhall have ceaſed. Pray God, my Leonora, we may heal the wounds that have ſunk ſo deep into his heart. Our cares will then be recompenſed by the happineſs of poſſeſſing a real friend to bleſs our dwelling.

P. S. I incloſe you the letter he received from his mother: it is intereſting, and will affect your ſympathetic heart.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

[*Incloſed in the preceding.*]

The MARCHIONESS of CLERMONT to her SON.

CEASE your uneaſineſs for my fate. Heaven will deign to ſoften it, and beſtow its providential care on the innocent. I find a thouſand ſweets in the puniſhment inflicted on me. I am ordered not to be ſeen by any one, and to confine myſelf to the ſociety of my children. Can ſuch an impriſonment be painful?

But, my dear ſon, what will become of *you?* Inſulated and friendleſs, oppreſſed by a thouſand cruel loſſes and privations. Ah! I feel all your ſorrows, and am intimately affected

ſected with every thing you have done for me. Your ſacrifices, your long reſearches, your delicate attentions, your diſintereſted attachment, and, above all, the good actions I have obſerved you to perform, and the liberality you diſſeminate, will be indelibly engraved upon my heart. I ſhall often viſit the good Mathurin, and ſhall endeavour to fill your place with regard to his welfare. When he talks to me of your goodneſs, how dear he will be to my heart!

May the like ſoft remembrances ſhed a ſalutary balm on your wounds, and enable you to ſupport with fortitude the ſevere ſeparation, which every thing concurs to render indiſpenſible.

Would to God you had ſome friend, whoſe ſympathy might become a perpetual ſource of happineſs to you. When two hearts are united by a perfect ſimilarity of taſte and character,

by

by a mutual affection and regard, they grow daily more and more attached to each other, becauſe they continually diſcover new coincidences of ſentiments, receive new pleaſures from their mutual attentions, and, in all their actions, feel new motives of love and eſteem. Each day, each hour, each moment, adds to their happineſs, and ſtrengthens, with emulative tenderneſs, their enviable ties. But this treaſure of friendſhip is as rare as it is invaluable. In the great world, every thing is light and airy as the wind. Men are continually the ſport of oppoſing paſſions, that deſtroy each other, and leave nothing in the heart but vanity and inſenſibility. They ſcarcely give to friendſhip the paſſing intereſt of a moment. Every one is willing to have, but none are willing to be friends. Is it then wonderful they ſhould be ſo ſcarce? Ah! ſhun thoſe frivolous

frivolous beings, and grant your confidence to wiſdom, virtue, and ſimplicity, without which true ſentiment cannot long exiſt.

Ah! how happy ſhould I be to hear of you from time to time? I ſhould accompany you in all your actions, participate your afflictions, and rejoice in your happineſs. But a hard neceſſity deprives me of that conſolation. The peace of both demands that you ſhould not again attempt to write. It would expoſe us to the greateſt danger.

'Tis a cruel ſacrifice.—Believe me, it coſts me as ſevere a pang as it can inflict on you. But in our unhappy moments let us raiſe our eyes to heaven for conſolation. There we ſhall communicate without reſerve, there we ſhall taſte happineſs unmixed.

P. S. If you reſpect the wiſhes and entreaties of your mother, you will

will make no further enquiries regarding the unfortunate young perſon—whom I cannot name.

LETTER XXXI.

DORMEUILLE to LEONORA.

I FEAR my ſilence makes my dear Leonora uneaſy. Alas! When you know the cauſe, you will ceaſe to reproach me for it. Would to God I could conceal ſuch painful events from you for ever! But why affect a myſtery, of which the illuſion muſt ſoon be diſpelled?

In my laſt I told you my friend was already in a convaleſcent ſtate, and that he would come and inhabit with us our peaceful retreat. What a deluſion!

luſion! I thought him ſincere in every thing he ſaid. I had no idea of the horrid deſign, he ſecretly harboured.

Some days after writing that letter, I obſerved his dejection of mind and abſent air conſiderably encreaſed. In vain did I often addreſs my converſation to him; he only anſwered in incoherent monoſyllables, without ſenſe or connection. One circumſtance gave me more uneaſineſs than all the reſt. George told me, he had paſſed a conſiderable part of the two laſt nights in writing. A thouſand reflections and apprehenſions crowded on my mind concerning the object of theſe writings, and of his concealing them from me. I was continually aſking myſelf why he did not communicate them, as we had never kept any thing ſecret from each other. However, rather than tax his confidence, I determined to wait till he voluntarily imparted

it. I only diſcovered my anxiety to George, and we ſo contrived, that my friend could not for a moment be out of ſight of the one or the other. I continued, as uſual, endeavouring to amuſe and divert his mind from theſe depreſſive reveries by converſation adapted to his taſte and character.

My attentions were without ſucceſs, and with grief I beheld the change, his mind had ſuffered. He no longer took pleaſure in walking, and when I attempted to reaſon, he ſcarcely heard me; or made ſome vague reply. Muſic, of which he was once ſo paſſionately fond, had no effect upon him. He played through complaiſance, but without the leaſt expreſſion. His eyes were always wild; his thoughts buſy, abſent, and diſtracted.

I was miſerable at finding my cares ſo ineffectual; but George, that excellent and faithful ſervant, whoſe

kind

kind attachment to his maſter I cannot ſufficiently admire, pointed out to me a ſurer method

The following day was my friend's birth-day. We therefore cauſed two children, who often came to viſit him, to be dreſſed in an elegant, but ſimple manner, and made each of them preſent him a noſegay. He was very fond of theſe little creatures, and had given them innumerable toys. The preſent interview was very affecting. Though my friend was ſeated in an armed chair, in the profoundeſt reverie, no ſooner did he ſee the little children, and receive their flowers and their kiſſes, but he awoke, as it were, from his lethargy, and inſtantly exchanged his dejection for ſmiles and gaiety. He took them upon his knees, and frequently careſſing them, participated their infantine delight at being

dreſſed out in fine white frocks, adorned with pink ribbands and bows.

You will readily imagine how happy I felt, to ſee that a ray of pleaſure could reach his heart. He ſoon diſcovered to whom he owed its warmth. "My dear fellow," ſaid he, ſqueezing my hand, "I perceive that a true friend is a friend at all times, and in the moſt trifling circumſtances."

He was deſirous the children ſhould ſtay to ſupper, and we were ſo fortunate as to obtain the permiſſion of their parents. The party was delightful. Wholly occupied with his two little gueſts, my friend ſeemed to forget every ſource of pain. He appeared happy to aſſume the gaiety, and aſſiſt the frolics of the children. He helped them to every thing they liked, ſuch as cream and cakes, and ſweetmeats, and in a thouſand ways endeavoured to pleaſe them. On their part,

part, they were ſupremely happy to be thus free from every reſtraint, and with people who, inſtead of commanding and forbidding, were eager to pleaſe and amuſe them. I obſerved they took every thing from my friend with much more pleaſure than from me; and this gratified him extremely. His heart is ſo tender, and his deſire to be beloved ſo ſtrong, that a mark of affection, or of preference, even from an animal, affects him more ſincerely than the greateſt benefits conferred on the majority of men.

After ſupper, when our little viſitors were going, all his gaiety forſook his features. He embraced them with an ardor that ſurprized me, and was ſtrongly agitated when they ſaid, at parting, "Good bye till to-morrow; we ſhall come again to-morrow." He anſwered, after a pauſe, and with heſitation, "Yes, my dear children,

come to-morrow." He then wiſhed me good night, and hurried into his chamber as if he had been flying from an enemy.

When he went to bed, he deſired George not to come into his room during the night, as was this good creature's cuſtom, being conſtantly anxious to know how his maſter was. He aſſigned as a reaſon, that his viſits diſturbed his ſleep.

The faithful George came and told me this, adding, that his maſter's eyes were red and ſwollen, and that when he left him he gave him his hand, and wiſhed him a good night in a more affectionate manner than uſual.

Every thing now confirmed my ſuſpicions, and, as you may imagine, I did not ſleep that night. I did not even undreſs, that I might be ready on the leaſt alarm. Fortunately, my chamber was ſeparated from that of

my

my friend only by a very thin partition, and I could hear every thing that paſſed.

Not imagining himſelf to be watched, he roſe about two o'clock, and repeating ſeveral times the laſt words of the children, "To-morrow, to-morrow," opened his window, and leaned out for a ſhort time; then ſhut it again, wrote at his bureau a letter, which I ſend you incloſed, and then went out into the garden. I immediately followed him, and had but juſt time to ſave his life. He was holding a piſtol to his head.

It would be impoſſible to deſcribe what I felt at that moment. I know not how the palpitation I felt left me ſtrength enough to act. Fortunately, however, I wreſted the fatal weapon from him in time. "Unjuſt, ungrateful man," ſaid I, with emotion, "I thought I had deſerved your

friendſhip and your confidence." He was ſo confuſed, ſurprized, and abaſhed, that he was unable to reply. He dared not even raiſe his eyes to look at me.

I took him by the arm, and led him in. The worthy George was coming to meet us. "My dear maſter," ſaid he, in tears, "My dear maſter!" and my friend embraced him without uttering a word. I then made a ſign to George to leave us.

Having entered my chamber, I ſat down by the ſide of my friend, and looked at him ſtedfaſtly, without ſaying a word. He ſaw in my countenance the grief and indignation I felt, and, embracing me tenderly, cried out, "Ah! Forgive, forgive, thy too unfortunate friend." — "Forgive a man," ſaid I, "who is ſo inſenſible, ſo barbarous, as to inflict the moſt cruel torments on a friend, who devotes

votes himſelf to his ſervice? No. I can never forgive ſuch a crime."

This quite overpowered him. He fell upon my neck, and bathed it with his tears, while his ſobs encreaſed the emotions by which I was agitated.

Perceiving that he now felt his error, I yielded to his remorſe, and we renewed our friendſhip with the tendereſt careſſes. Never did it appear ſo delightful. I ſeemed to be embracing my friend, as it were, for the firſt time, after an abſence of twenty years.

I endeavoured to perſuade him to ſet off the ſame day, accuſing him of having forgot my invitation, and aſſuring him, he ought not to entertain a doubt of the pleaſure with which I had propoſed it. His anſwer was this:

"After ſo many misfortunes, it would be a happy change, my dear Dormeuille, to paſs my life with you.

The pleaſure of your ſociety, that of your amiable Leonora, the conſtant proſpect of a family united in the bonds of affection, would afford my heart an inexhauſtible ſource of enjoyment, were it capable of ever taſting ſuch pleaſures. But, alas! the melancholy that oppreſſes me would ſpread around me an atmoſphere of ſadneſs, that might diſturb the peace of the houſe I inhabited; for pleaſure ever flies my preſence. You would participate, not diſpel, my griefs, and that would encreaſe my affliction. Every thing concurs to condemn me to live in ſolitude, far from that ſociety which I have no power to render happy; and my fixed reſolution, which nothing can alter, is to enter ſome religious houſe, where I ſhall, at leaſt, have the conſolation of rendering no one miſerable but myſelf. I ſhall often think of you, my dear Dormeuille, with

with deep regret, for you are the only friend I have in the world. But I ſhall conſole myſelf by writing to you frequently. Our hearts will be united, notwithſtanding the diſtance that will ſeparate us. No ſpace can divide hearts that are united by love."

All my entreaties to alter this reſolution, at which my heart revolted, were ineffectual. Without informing me of his intention, he ſet off two days afterwards, at five in the morning, attended by George.

Such, my dear wife, has been the cauſe of my ſilence, and the motive of my detention here. I have promiſed my friend to comply with his wiſhes, expreſſed in the letter I incloſe, and which forms his laſt will and teſtament. Remember, when you read it, the circumſtances under which it was written. I

I have

I have ſo many things to ſettle for him, that I foreſee it will be five or ſix days before I can ſet off. I wait with impatience the moment when duty will permit me again to preſs to my boſom her who can alone enable me to ſupport the loſs of my friend.

LETTER XXXII.

[*Incloſed in the preceding.*]

Two o'clock in the morning.

ADIEU, my dear Dormeuille. I ſhall never ſee you more, for my laſt hour is come.

While the mind of your friend is buſied with this dark deſign, your's is enjoying the ſweets of undiſturbed repoſe,

repoſe, peaceful like this ſerene night, when not a zephyr diſturbs the univerſal ſilence. Sleep on, dear friend: may the moſt delicious illuſions intoxicate thee with pleaſure.—But when thou awakeſt—when thou ſhalt learn—Alas! methinks I hear the cries and lamentations of thy grief—I ſee a deluge of tears flow down your cheeks—you haſten once more to embrace the corpſe of your lifeleſs friend—But no. Your careſſes will not reanimate his ſoul—'tis over—he breathes no more.

Ceaſe your murmurs, your reproaches, and your ſorrows. They are unjuſt. Seek not to reaſon with a mind driven to deſpair, which every thought diſtracts, and every recollection torments. I ſink beneath the burden—My afflictions have overcome me—I have loſt both my feeling and my reaſon, and my palſied heart has forgot

its

its ſenſibility, and is incapable of ſentiment and of love.— All nature, the whole human race, have no longer an intereſt in my boſom—I am a nullity, a mere blank in the ſcale of exiſtence —All my faculties are annihilated, and an irreſiſtible deſtiny drags me to the tomb——

Oh! Death, ſole ſovereign of the univerſe, the wretch's laſt conſolation, oh! come and relieve my irretrievable misfortunes.

This, then, is the period of my exiſtence. Another little moment, and this hand ſhall no longer communicate the feelings of my ſoul. This heart, once ſo tender and affectionate, which ſtill beats to the ſenſibilities of friendſhip, ſhall ſoon be cold and inanimate as marble. What is man? Dormeuille, he is born but to ſuffer. He flutters, and agitates his being for a day, and then ſinks into the inanity

of

of death. What a wretched exiſtence! For what an inſignificant purpoſe are all the miracles of nature performed!

Ben' è 'l viver mortal, che ſi n'aggrada,
Sogno d'infermi, e fola di romanzi.

Life is at beſt Delirium's madd'ning dream,
Romance's viſion, Hope's deluſive gleam.

But you, my dear friend, are happy. Love ſtrews thy path with flowers, and offers to thy enraptured eye his moſt delicious proſpects; eſteemed and beloved by your worthy relatives, adored by an amiable partner, and deſtined ſoon to exult amid the careſſes of a lovely offſpring.——Ah! how ſweet to die in the conviction that you are the happieſt of men!

I might have been ſo too. The duties of a ſon, a huſband, a brother, and a father—Oh! how dear they would have been to my heart!—But no.—

no.—My doom is fixed—and I muſt die!——

My death will afflict you—the tender heart of your Leonora will participate in the ſorrows I ſhall cauſe—You will both weep over the tomb of the moſt unfortunate of men.—My tender-hearted friends, be not afflicted. You have loſt nothing. I could but have occaſioned you a ſucceſſion of pain and torment.

You will find in my port-folio the papers relative to my fortune. I requeſt you to diſpoſe of it in the following manner.

George ſhould be the firſt object of your attention. Give him 20,000 livres as a reward for his kind ſervices. Poor fellow! how will he bear the loſs of a maſter whom he loved ſo affectionately? Do not refuſe him your kindneſs, for he deſerves it. Receive him into your houſe, for he is worthy

worthy of your confidence. He is the moſt attentive of ſervants, and the beſt of men. May your kindneſs to him make him ſoon forget his former maſter.

Give Richard enough to ſettle all his children, agreeably to my promiſe. Thoſe worthy people will often talk of me, and recal the days of my infancy with tenderneſs. Their tears will be mingled with thoſe of Dormeuille. Give them my hautboy, and the little working peaſant's coat, which they have preſerved with ſo much care. They will receive them with that tender regard which I am certain they feel for the wearer.

Do not forget the two little children who have viſited me every morning ſince I firſt came to this town, and who this evening ſo tenderly careſſed me, and preſented me their flowers with ſo much grace; faithful emblems of their

their unſullied innocence, and their opening beauty. I am indebted to them for much conſolation, and many happy intervals. As ſoon as they began to climb my knees, or pat my cheeks with their little hands, all my ſorrows vaniſhed, and I felt a ſecret pleaſure that I cannot deſcribe. They reminded me, alas! of other children.

Enquire the ſituation of their parents. If they need any aſſiſtance, employ your kind exertions in their favour. Give theſe dear little children each a white frock, like thoſe they wore this evening in which they looked ſo charming. They will come to-day and will aſk for their friend—What can you ſay to them?—Aſk them to come ſometimes to play around my tomb—the idea is ſoothing to me.

I be-

I bequeath my nurſe 300 livres. This good woman has been uncommonly aſſiduous; her attentions were delicate and refined. Often have I ſeen her look at me, and then turn away her eyes and weep.

Go and ſee Mathurin. Enquire if any new misfortune diſturbs his little eſtabliſhment, and endeavour, if poſſible, to reſtore him to happineſs. Employ the reſidue of my property for the good of the poor, and give relief to as many of the unfortunate as poſſible.

Should chance lead to an interview with my dear mother, endeavour to afford her every conſolation. Give the children a kiſs for me, and particularly her little girl, who was more partially fond of me than the other two.

Adieu! my dear Dormeuille! You will find me in the garden, in the honeyſuckle

neyſuckle bower. Come thither ſometimes in memory of your friend, and ſay, "He poſſeſſed too much ſenſibility to live happy among mankind."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.